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The Student



Winter 1987-88

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Front cover photograph by Carl B. King

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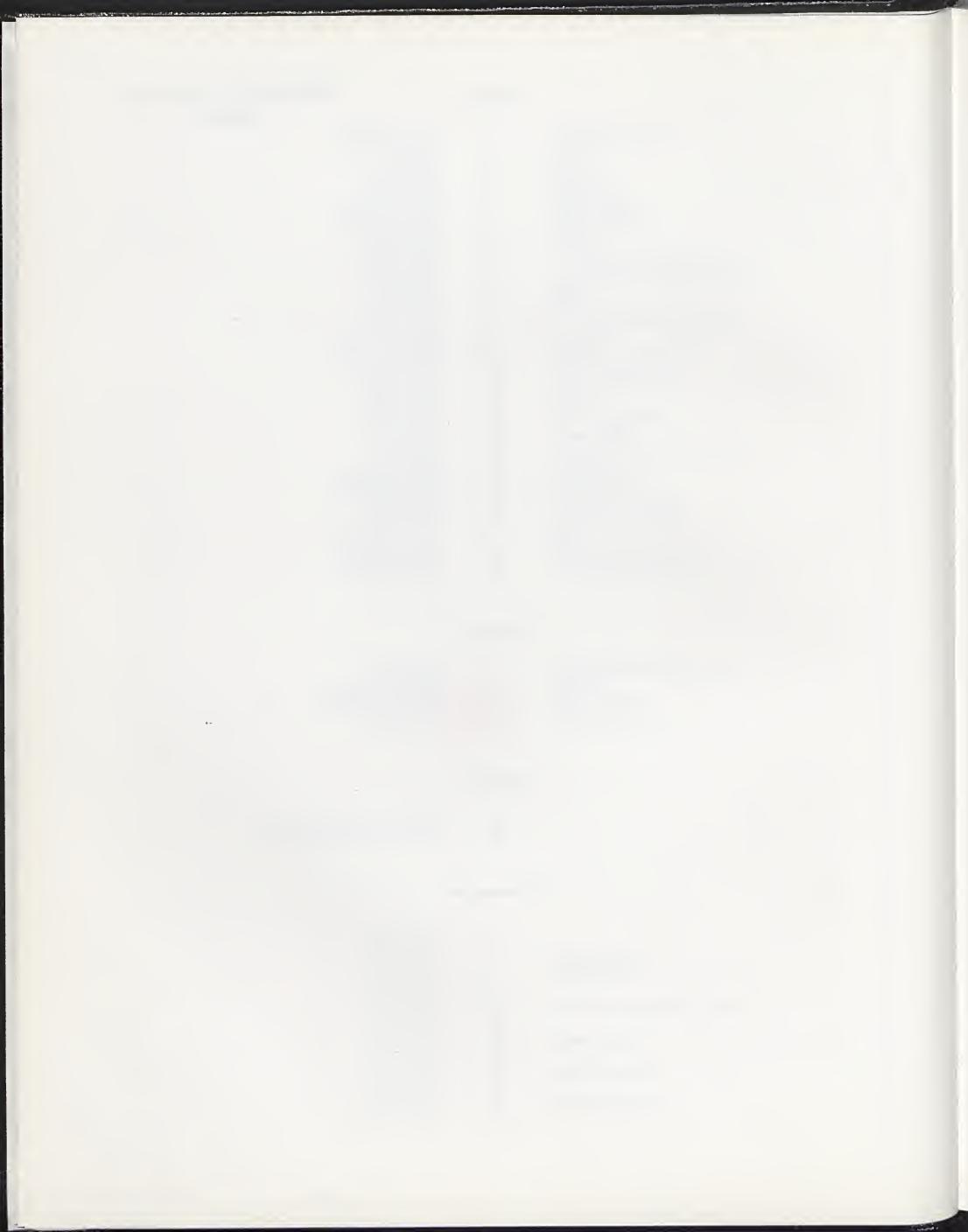
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Ka'imi (The Search)

Cycling through Georgia,
the wind dies like people
abandon their houses

and move away.
My lungs are soaked, the air
so shot with water,

it clings to me
like a drowning hand. I escape,
breathing hard.

Peeling off my shirt, I
wipe the dripping film
from my brakes and gears,

watching the earth sweat.
Everything rusts
in this country. The Gulf

hangs low in the sky,
black and swollen like
a bubble.

I lose my way, thinking
of words I don't know,
cities under water.

Donna Bowman



Carl B. King

After Life

|By March 18th the snow has turned ragged.
Red runners scrape where once they carved,
yet many continue their bumpy rides with seeming content.
Unhappy though, you return your sled to the basement
searching now for the bicycle pump.
Curved handlebars reach up for guiding hands and soon,
spinning pedals blur a speckled pavement.
High up and speeding, wondering why they keep plodding uphill
dragging behind them their doomed vehicles.
Forgotten are the scars on the thin rails that carried you too,
downhill.

Eric R. Johnson

Stumpy Meets the Firecracker

They met at the back door, face to face, like two dogs stiff-legging each other, not sure whether to attack or just smell for a while.

One, the workman, was standing in baggy blue trousers and a light blue shirt with a patch on his left chest reading "Dwayne."

He was about fifty, maybe forty, but a country stock so it was more difficult to tell. He was rather gangly, like Ichabod Crane. His skin was reddish and rubbed. Dull red hair showed a lot of brown.

The workman wore glasses like the protective kind one wears in a factory or a school chemistry lab. The other man stood before him on the back porch of the house in which the workman was working.

The man who stood outside of the house was trying to move furniture into the house. The workman blocked the back door. The door opened into the kitchen of the house. The furniture had been acquired by the second man's newlywed son for this, the son's first house. The son stood with the second man, mostly obscured by the piece of furniture they were moving.

Both men were uncomfortable at that moment. Each was foreign to the other. The workman, who had been hired by the landlord of the house, was putting down a new linoleum floor. He recognized the man outside as being from the North, a Yankee.

The Yankee could have jumped from a painting. His face was distinctively long. The face had been passed through time from Wales to Pennsylvania, to Ohio, to Iowa, then north to Minnesota. The face was speckled with bright blue eyes and a pointed, scarecrow nose. His hair was thinning but still covered the entire head.

The Yankee spoke in the funny, screwing nasal of Minnesota and Canada. He made known his concern about whether the floor would be finished in the near future so as to allow him and his son to carry the huge armoire of bleached mahogany into the house. The ponderous piece of furniture looked like white chocolate.

The man and his son were marching through woods, wearing blue uniforms one hundred and twenty-five years earlier. They came suddenly upon a stray sentry wearing grey. All three were too aggressively frightened to shoulder their muskets in time to actually get off a shot.

The grey-suited sentry darted into the dark underbrush and disappeared into his natural habitat; a quick deer or fog burning off of a forest.

A fourth man, an intervenor, offered an explanation to the workman. The man and his son simply wanted to know when the floor would be done. They didn't intend to rush the blue-clad workman. The son's new wife had supper ready and there was still much furniture to move.

The intervenor was a volunteer. He was a friend of the son. His presence was accounted for by the necessity to move the large amount of furniture. He was more familiar with the workman's ways. He came from a border state, Maryland, which carries a southern tinge.

In the explanation, the moment of recognition was eased. The house would become a home.

The workman comfortably returned to his floor. The father and son went to the front of the house where the truck was parked, to unload smaller furniture through the front door.

The intervenor lingered at the rear door, pleased the two men returned to their work in peace.

Cliff Mount



Carl B. King

Vag

Black eyes stare blankly,
Ashen hair drifts over them.
A final breath rises,
Then escapes. Pigeons strut
Around the bench. The autumn winds
Scatter his newspaper blanket.
Begging for food, a dog licks
His hand, then must turn away.
Night buries the park
As another bum comes and breaks
His hand to take away
The half-empty bottle.
Then he staggers toward a subway grate,
Knowing it will keep him warm;
The rising air.

Jeff Gillis

Unnamed

It passes unnoticed in the world of men —
But the Earth feels it,
As tears drop uncaught,
Pounding the soil.

Butterflies falter in their flight,
And the wind falls silent,
As if the earth must mourn
What men do not.

Still, the woman cries,
Clutching at her emptiness,
Filling it with guilt
Neither men nor earth will bear.

Noel Hunter

Building Blocks



Carl B. King

Justification

The Word
it fades in and out of the paper

like our lives fade in and out of each other's minds

direct complacency brings
certain spastic depression
to lonely people
and we all dream . . .

DR E A MM M

in trickle-down, systematic
destruction
of sunsets
and
dawns . . .

the world
captured between
the two
in endless motion,
sees a constant red.

Cathy Turner

Sky Bridge



Dave Olson

A little bit of life

A little drunk,
we sing and stumble in laughter
in the quiet cobblestone streets.
A little tired,
we sigh
and head for bed.
A little alone in my dark room
I think of you,
you'd like it here, you know.
A little sad,
I touch your picture,
I've been through so much without you
How will I ever explain?
A little tear surfaces
I long to come home
to share with you again.

But I dream of this evening
The one I just had —
new friends
bad jokes
loud laughs

A little longer
that's all I ask
We're all just starting to share.
A little too soon
all will be yesterday
a time
a place
a dream
But you will hold me
and wipe my tears

And a little too late
I'll understand.

Martha Henseler

The Infant Kiss

I say goodnight — night
I tuck her in tight.
But things are not right —
What is this? An Infant Kiss
That sends my body tingling.
I've never fallen for
A little girl before.
No control,
Just a kid, just at school.
Back home they'd call me dirty
Her little hand is on my heart.
She's got me where it hurts me.
Knock, knock who's there in this baby girl?
You know how to work me.
And all of my barriers are going,
It's starting to show.
Let go, let go.
I cannot sit and let
Something happen I'll regret.
Ooh, she scares me.
There's a woman behind those eyes,
I catch her when I'm staring.
Ooh, how she frightens me.
When she whispers privately
Windy winds blow me.
Words of care on her lips
That speak of adult love.
I want to smack, but I hold back.
I only want to touch,
But I must stay and find a way to stop
Before it gets too much.

George I. Rose

Genesis

The house shudders as the storm sets in.
In the flash the pavement glistens,
churning rivulets of primordial stew.
Rain slices through the screen,
the firefall of a thousand suns.
Nose pressed to the window,
an archaic god,
whipped by the winds
of his own creation.

Martha Sisk

Museum

I wrote a poem one day while sitting outside of a small anthropological museum in Zurich. In part it came from what happens when two trains pass one another going opposite directions, the vacuum that is created if the windows are open and the thunderclap that sounds. In part it came from the planetarium display I saw in Lucerne. That was at the Verkehrshaus, the Swiss transport museum, which, unexciting as it may sound, was fascinating.

Back to Zurich, however. I was sitting next to a small fountain, watching passersby feed the many birds. One beautiful white pigeon flew down, spreading its wings and tail and showing every perfectly delineated feather in use. It began to peck at the bread and seeds scattered on the patio. Before long I noticed a crippled grey pigeon close beside it. This bird constantly held up one leg and dragged a wing. Leaning down to peck at the ground invariably threw him off balance.

These two birds were like giants among the dozens of tiny sparrows flitting around the fountain. The interesting part of the event was that I sat on a side of the fountain opposite from where people came and threw crumbs. All the other birds moved about to where the food was, but the crippled pigeon stayed hidden and alone, for the most part. During the hour or so I sat there, I was the only person who saw him.

I wanted to write a poem about the bird, but whatever I put down seemed demeaning to him. Instead I thought about another pigeon, one with the power of flight but in a sort of trap of his own.

On Sunday morning in Rome I got up early to beat the crowds to St. Peter's, and did. At times I have thought that if I were Catholic, I would be a nun; now I think that if I were a nun, I would want to be there. The art was overwhelming. When I climbed the stairs into the dome and on into the cupola above it, I got short of breath not from the climb so much as from sheer excitement and awe at being alone in the presence of something so great. And of course, being there on Sunday meant that everyone around me was going through the dance of worship.

There, in all that sky-striving architecture and painting and sculpture, it is hard to see how one might avoid worshipping the human, created beauty. But then I considered that somewhere — if not in the artists themselves, then perhaps in one of the workmen, or in the dedication of the building, was the sense of for Whom they were doing this — the sense of the shadowy reflection of a coming kingdom on this earth. Isn't adding beauty to this world a tribute to the source of beauty? Isn't that worship in itself, even if one doesn't know what one is praising?

And in the heights of the dome, in the creased rays of sunshine coming from the skylight, a pigeon flew with frantic beating of wings, trying to find a way out.

Donna Bowman

They burned me with fires
that only kids can kindle
The brutality of babes
with tongues like razor blades
and me with my soft soul
bookworm/daydreamer/the mousey sort
prime target for torment
real tender flesh for those fangs.
And while they feasted
like belching savages
ripping to shreads
what was to have been
my idyllic youth
I received a most excellent
education. I learned
how to beg with my eyes for the basics:
one kind word
one friend
one dance
with my heart for heroes, deliverance
a savior
I leaned how to cry with invisible tears.
I see them now Hell's children grown to
Fat, alcoholic lumps
snot-nosed brats yanking at their breasts
ugly wives
joyless lives
terminally impotent.
And don't they want me now
their long lost pal
with their Auld Lang Syne
their school days souvenirs . . .
Where were all those lovely invitations
when my hopeful little hands were trembling?
Where were you all
When I gave a damn.

Bonnie Gillon



Janet Ramey

Before Rain in Plymouth, Vermont

In front of the picket fence,
which needs a coat of paint,
the old ash turns its leaves
toward the clouds, like the dog
outside the dry goods store
waiting to be scratched.
The wind plays each leaf,
leaving them tingling.
The pale, silvery veins
pulse with the secret,
swaying the tree:
a child's ponytail,
a field of buttercups,
a sea anemone.

Leslie Tate

Winston-Salem, Downtown



Dave Olson

Prayer

I need to go to Italy today.

There, they drink cheap chianti,
and sometimes quite good chianti
with their lunches of several courses.

After their meals,
they sit in the piazzas and courtyards in the bold afternoon sun
to digest with the last glass of wine from the bottle.

The shops are closed for the afternoon.
They go home with their lovers and wives to siesta
but leave the windows open.

You can hear the rhythmic grunts of lovers from behind dark,
heavy, wooden shutters, with slats cut into them
as you walk by on the street.

These things take place
along the northwestern curl of Italy,
just where it becomes France.

The Frenchmen across the border look dark like Italians,
but are still erect and languid
like slim parisiens.

They speak French a little differently,
with a funny, twisting slur of the language.
The sound looks conical like a shell.

The heat there, takes you gently inside itself.
It wraps you, thick.
It pushes you softly to the floor, on top.

In the dimming afternoon light,
still, sweat-painted bodies sit on the edge of damp sheets,
groggy.

A man,
really wanting to go back to bed
polishes a bead of sweat off of a nipple.

They stand in silence.
It is time to open the shop.
It is four o'clock.

Cliff Mount

Ode to My Worn Out Sneakers

Your soles are shot
Your laces frazzled. Once white now
Your hide's gone gray.
But weren't we something on the Metro: A neon sign
American.
And as far and as fast as feet can get fleet
Mornings we hit those boulevards
Haussmann to Gambetta
Sèvres to Saint-Michel every wary
Of land mines from the canines
Firebombs from the disenchanted.
And in those tight gray oyster rues we found
The secret pearls of Paris. Sure
I've other souvenirs
Postcards
Guidebooks
Assorted tourist trash but nothing
Takes me back more clearly
Than the sight of your filthy tongues.

Bonnie Gillon



sitting on a lonely shore
catching for the dream man
under moss
around me grown
I lie
something here is very strange
we all want to rearrange
the government
footprints in the cement
all day long
we're alright
the sun's not bright
but the moon is sure to come on strong
and lead the day astray

She's a real loner, man
with a real definitive plan
sitting around hand in hand
with Nobody

She is old like the mountains
and wise like the sea
warm like the soul
and just like me

I think we all understand . . . and
agree!
about what she thought we didn't know
anyway
too well.

Cathy Turner



Janet Ramey





Chandran R. Sabanayagam

Roofing

On the garage,
I remember climbing
My father's shoulders,
Trying to reach
The roof.

One jump and I had
Those gutters —
The soil,
The wet brown leaves,
The dead wiffle balls
Floating like old moons.

Down on the ground,
He said,
“Aren’t you boys, part-Iroquois.

That’s too bad:
Big money building bridges:
The Golden Gate, the Whitman,
The George Washington.

No, not you boys,
you’ll never be bridge builders.”

Michael D. Piscal

A Game of War

The weatherman who spoke on channel 9 predicted that rain would fall. Other than this prediction and a few clouds in the sky, there was no indication that the weather would not be beautiful all day, but just in case the meteorologist was correct in his prediction, my brother and I decided to make the most of the day while it lasted. We took a checkerboard and proceeded into the woods behind my house and set up the game on a large, old stump. We sat down on the ground beside it and commenced playing. We were engrossed thusly when there ensued a heavy downpour in the form of a deluge of water. Acknowledging that the soothsayer who spoke from the magic box in my living room was correct in his prophecy of a gully-washer, we determined that it would be best if our game was called on account of rain. In order to protect the checker set from the damage it would surely sustain from the storm, I elected to leave it inside the hollow stump upon which we had been playing, rather than chance carrying it back through the deluge of water.

When the storm ceased the next afternoon, I sallied forth to retrieve the instruments of our amusement the previous day from the stump in which I had deposited them. As I strolled through the forest, the water droplets which were present in great numbers on the leaves and branches made the trees sparkle almost magically. The dripping forest assumed in my imagination the form of an enchanted land of fairies and magicians.

When I came into the vicinity of the stump, I heard several high, squeaky voices. I looked in the direction of the stump, trying to discern their origin. The voices continued, but I saw no one, man nor beast.

In order to observe the owners of the voices without engaging any possible protective instinct on their part to make a hasty retreat, I descended to my hands and knees and crept toward the old stump. From this lower elevation the stump looked more like an ancient cathedral than the remains of an old, dead tree. With its pointed domes, arches, and buttresses of rotting wood, it presented an almost perfect picture of Gothic architecture. As I drew near it, I imagined myself a prince proceeding to the cathedral to view some ceremony that was to be held therein. When I arrived at the cathedral-stump, I peeked in through a tiny window, and this is what I saw:

The checkerboard was spread on the floor of the cavern formed by the hollow stump. In one corner were stacked three red checkers. Stacks of one and two red checkers were placed in a stair-step fashion leading up to the tallest stack. On top of this stack sat a tiny fat man, no more than one and a half inches from head to foot and three inches around. He wore a long cape of the same shade of the checkers upon which he sat, and the skin on his fat little face was just as red. His hair was white, and he wore on his head the top from a tube of toothpaste.

Running around on the board near this fat little red man were three other little men, not as fat but just as red. They hurried back and forth, talking to each other in high squeaky voices and looking over to the opposite corner of the board.

In the opposite corner there were stacks of black checkers arranged similar to the red ones across the board. On the tallest of these stacks sat a tiny fat man who was as black as the other one was red. His hair was yellow, and on his head he wore the pump-top from a bottle of hair spray.

Three or four little black men were running around near the fat black one. They conversed in high voices, looked across to their red counterparts, and sometimes disappeared and reappeared in holes in the rotten stump.

"As king of Blackacheckeramia," shouted the fat black one to the fat red one, "I demand that you keep your little red maggots off my squares!"

"And as king of Redenpieceburgh," returned the other, "I demand that you keep your little black piss-ants off my squares!"

The black king began to talk in low tones to the other black men around him. Seeing this, the red king likewise conferred with his advisors, momentarily looking up to see what the black king was up to.

Suddenly the black king stopped and said, "We Blackacheckeramanians claim all of the squares on this board on the grounds that we got to them first!"

The red king consulted his advisors and then bellowed in his high squeaky voice, "We Redpiecenburghers claim all the squares on this board on the grounds that we claim all the red ones and there are more red ones than there are black ones!"

With an angry look the black king turned to his aides-de-camp and discussed this. They seemed to come to a decision and the black king shouted "No there aren't!"

"Aren't what?" shouted the red king.

"Aren't more red ones than black ones?"

"Redonesthanblackones what?"

"Squares!"

For a few seconds, the red king just stared at his opponent in surprise at hearing this. "Bring forth the Royal Mathematiculator, Addipus Subtractadigitatus, the Grand Multiplicative Divider of Redpieceburgh!" he shouted to his allies.

From a hole in the stump there appeared a tall, thin red man. He was wearing the pointed top of a squeeze tube of blue food color on his head, and he had strapped to his back a white six sided die.

"Addipus Subtractadigitatus," began the red king, "Grand and Multiplicative Divider of Redenpieceburgh, Marveless Knower of Numbers, Tremendous Teller of Truths, Sole Soliciter

of Solutions, the King has a question for you. The black king doth quote with his horrible, putrid, and vile mouth that there are not more beautiful red squares on this here board than there are ugly, cavernous black ones. Count them, Addipus!"

The mathematician unstrapped the die from his back and threw it onto the board. He walked around in circles, rolling the die in front of him and saying, "Three red plus four black, plus one red, plus two black, plus two red, plus six black, plus three red, plus five black. Done, sire!"

"How many red ones?" asked the king.

"Nine million, four hundred thirty-six thousand, seven hundred and fifty-two."

"And how many black ones, Seer of the Seen?"

"Six, your honorable redness."

"A declaration!" shouted the black king upon hearing this. "That firstitude counts higher than majoritiveness, thus do we sullenly declare."

Upon hearing this, the red king stood up and said, "Then, in accordance with the Treaty of Redness, which I have signed, I declare all red squares the property of Redinpeaceburo, and all Blackaczechamaniacs that remain on red squares shall be taken prisoner."

At this, the black king stepped down from his throne and he and his subjects scrambled to stand only on the black squares, moving all their black checkers with them and disrupting the neat stacks. The black king said, "Well, then, in accordance with that same treaty, which I shall also sign some time, I declare all black squares the property of Blackaczechamania, and all Redpissers that remain on black squares shall be taken prisoner!"

Then all the red men scrambled to remove themselves from the black squares. They all were successful except for the mathematician, who dropped his hat and then fell down upon a black square.

"Call forth the Royal Collector of Prisoners!" called the black king. "Seize the Red Liar of Numerical Lies, who has violated a treaty which his own king has signed, and I am going to sign when I get around to it!"

From holes in the stump behind the black king, there appeared four black men. They each wore for helmets the shells of acorns and carried hat pins as weapons. Together they carried a hair net in which they entangled the poor math man. They dragged him back to the black king who bade them suspend him from a stick which had been stuck through the board on a black square.

"Oh!" fumed the red king. "You shall get the whipping boy for this! Bring forth the whipping boy and the Royal Whippers!"

Three red men dragged out a child's rag doll and left it in front of the red king. They then brought forth a stainless steel spoon.

"For stealing Addipus Subbtractadigitatus, the Uniter of Knots, and the De-riddle-izer of Riddles, they shall get seventeen whips on the whipping boy!" shouted the red king.

The three red men raised the spoon and hit the doll in the stomach seventeen times. With every fall of the spoon, the black king and his subjects stomped their feet, pulled their hair, gnashed their teeth, and rolled around on the ground.

"Aagh!" shouted the black king. "For that, you shall get two minutes of blackness! For two minutes, everything that is not black must leave the board. I so declare it!"

With many groans and protestations, the red men stepped off of the board and sat around the edges with their heads in their hands. The black men strutted proudly around the board, making faces at the red men and stepping on all the red squares they could reach. After two minutes, the black king blew a whistle and the black men scrambled back to their corner. The red men clambered onto the board and resumed their positions on the red squares. One of the red men whispered something to his king.

"Oh, yes," said the red king. "How are we going to decide who gets to keep Addipus Subbtractadigitatus, lately of Redniecebnburgh?"

"I declare," said the black king after conferring with some other black men, "that it shall be done by a contest of fists!"

The two kings each consulted their advisors and then hopped off of their thrones and waddled to the center of the board, where they met. They both rolled up their sleeves and faced each other. Then they each hit their own hands with their fists three times. On the fourth time, the red king hit his hand with his fist again, but the black king slapped his hand flat on his other one.

"Aha!" said the black king. "Paper covers rock. I win!"

"Oh," said the red king, "you always win that game."

Both kings returned to their respective corners. The black one said, "Get me the Official Changer of Sides!"

A black man who wore on his head a large wing nut came out of a hole in the stump. He was carrying a bucket in one hand and the broken end of a watercolor brush in the other.

"The mathematicizer gets his side changed," ordered the black king.

The Changer of Sides approached the mathematician, who had been released from the net. The Side-changer dipped his brush into his bucket and then proceeded to paint the mathematician black. When it was done, Addipus began to run around with the other black men, rolling his die now for them instead of for the red men.

"Look, you black cow-nose," said the red king, "I'm higher than you are!"

Meanwhile, some of the red men had rolled out another red checker and added it to the stack upon which their king sat.

At this, the black king commanded that more checkers be brought out for his stack. "See there, you red pig's tail," shouted the black king, "I'm higher than you!"

Then the two kings began to race to see who could make the higher stack. When all the checkers were gone, the red king had a stack twelve high, and the black king had only eleven.

The black king shouted, "You have exceeded the highest legal height at which a king can sit! The maximum height is eleven checkers. You have to forfeit two checkers for that!"

The red king angrily threw down two checkers from his stack. He then looked at the black king and said "Your hat exceeds the maximum height at which a king's hat can sit! You have to forfeit two checkers, too!"

As the black king began to remove the checkers from his stack, it began to rain. The rain flowed into the stump through numerous leaks in the roof. As the red and black men got wet, their colors all ran off them onto the checkerboard, until all of the men were as white as could be.

The white men collected their belongings and they all returned down the same hole to escape from the rain.

Seeing that my checkerboard was ruined by the rain and by the now white men, I left it there and walked home, laughing to myself.

William A. Doyle IV

Lake Dragon



Dave Olson

Silent Movie with Music

There is no sound
in the fire, no angry red in my
black and white TV.
We've fallen to the floor,
twisting clothes through our fists,
hissing feral songs.
One more dollar
this room owes me, one
more poem to slip in my wallet.
And my senses globe,
three worlds.
My nerves are cleanly
clipped to their own dreams
of heat lightning.
First: the TV evening
news, mouths, no volume.
Our skin collecting scratch
and bite and sweat.
And on that tape you squeezed
through the mail, Fats Domino
fingerpainting a sky
above us, a sky with clouds
and Shu Rah, yes,
flowers so flat and red
they'd burn your eyes.

Donna Bowman



Carl B. King

It Takes Two To Laugh

Walking across the Sahara,
I search for a color, a cloud,
to break the running brown miles.

Talk about a movie, a play,
sing a half-forgotten hymn
to the powdery wind.

Quietly mixing in my head —
pink faces, bright cities;
how easy it is to forget them.

Sand grains creep into my shoes
rubbing new blisters.
It only takes one,
to cry.

Sloane Frantz

Floating or Flying



Dave Olson

Cum Hemostasis?

I am tired of bleeding
tired of the constant tension between
running to you
and
running away
tired of wondering where
my jagged edges
fit
the contours of your puzzle
I am tired of bleeding
tired of watching my ante grow dusty
on the table
fading faster than new jeans in clorox.
Stop watching my sand skip quickly through
your fingers
Call it:
Stay
and I'll pour til I'm bone dry
Go
and I'm day before yesterday gone.

S.K. Morrison

Lonely.
The word hits sweetly and explodes down my spine,
pulsing its electricity,
tingling fragile wires.
Words roll the tongue,
wrap the air so exquisitely
you can forget them for a while in the very feel of them.
But when my soul grows numb to its own weavings,
where is something that still excites,
and holds me, spine, soul, and all,
when words no longer matter?

Martha Sisk

Valentino's Funeral

Overcoats, bowlers,
black umbrellas, November
rain. I remember once
she told me she went to
Valentino's funeral, waiting
there among thousands, her lace
handkerchief, snowflakes against terra
cotta skin. Her grey glasses, the ones that
were always lost, foggy with the weather.
She trusted her rose would be there
until the first clump of earth
dirtied the oak. That rose did last,
grew, reaching, and the handkerchief,
like so many socks
Valentino had worn, was lost in the dryer.

Sloane Frantz

Half Crescent

When tonight
falls silently
winding down
like the drummer's last beats —
your glowing
late entrance
slides up over the rockies —
the half crescent
reclines suspended
above the jutted skyline —
your smile floats
kissed by evening's haze.

The sand
sticking to my feet
I throw to the wind —
and watch your glowing
with only a yellow eyed owl.

Leslie Tate

One Night at the Roman Coliseum

One night while walking through the Roman Coliseum,
The cool night's mist began to swirl
Until the writhing fog took
The form of a beautiful girl.
The woman-cloud grew still
And a moonbeam spotlight unveiled
A ghost from my literary past, Daisy Miller,
Standing in the wind like a tattered sail.

"Come along, my lovely gentleman, for we have much to do.
We've places to go, people to see,
I would so love for you to come with me."

"Wait, Daisy, I can't fly like you.
Where will we go, who will we see?"

"Don't worry, we'll have fun.
We'll convulse with kings, douche with duchesses
And drink tea with the crème de la crème.
We'll waltz atop the Eiffel tower and two-step the Pyrénées;
We'll drink lots of Colt. 45 and go on puking sprees.
There's always a ball to be had when you live in Carpe Diem.
So hurry now, there's much to be done!"

"Daisy, my sweet and sour ghost,
I'd love to join you but the pleasantries of which you boast
Are but dreams for me."

"My beloved blockhead, do you think me so unkind
As to offer impossibility?

You have but to kiss my feverish ass
And your dreams will become reality."

"What you promise sounds like magic,
But I have known temptation before
And had to get shots for it at the clinic.
So keep your applause to yourself and return to 42nd street.
Find somebody else, sweetmeat,
My bones aren't yours to leap,
For I have people to see and 'miles to go before I sleep."

At that moment I felt stronger than I ever had before.
That phantom faded — then was gone,
And I walked on, towards the dawn,
Faithful evermore.

Jeff Gillis

Chandran R. Sabanayagam



Kinkaku Ji

Bamboo trees surrounded Kyoko-chi,
as liquid visitors kissed the green pool
and pocked stone islands reigned tranquility.

Home of Yoshimitsu, shogun of Ashikaga,
who cleansed in the sosei before worship,
and enjoyed the Mount Kinugasayama peace.
A sculptured Phoenix, wings poised for flight,
watched in silence.

Now, the havens of devotion
are splattered with slogans
and scarred by blades of love.
The palace lies mistreated and forgotten.
Gold, once the pride of the warrior,
hangs in strips
waiting to be peeled,
dead skin.

William Boles

School Abroad

We became friends
we didn't have a choice
We were all so different
with only circumstance in common.
We laughed
traveled
complained
shared.

But we always found a reason to smile and keep searching.
Our backgrounds were so diverse.
Ones we probably never would've considered approaching.

But here we are — reluctant to leave —
friends.

What held us together most?
The cheers and laughter ...
when someone made a mistake.
Ridicule?
Oh no, support, precious support,
his guitar string broke
she forgot the words
they fell out of the boat
she sang out of tune.
Never will I meet a more receptive group
who joined by difference stood to cheer
for the mistakes of people they really only knew by sight.
Now forced to separate by the diversity of our lives
We leave with a lesson, and the truth —
forever true friends.

Martha Henseler

She wore a smile, her crucifix;
hollowed your soul and filled with her own.
Slowly, slowly, she spread herself around —
As a singular comfort, a home in each of you —
She built a destination.

And at night, alone, she jumped into bed,
pleading with her mind not to ask, and
urging her body to sleep.

Lesley Bartlett

September in Virginia

That night she told him,
there was hard rain, steam rising
from tar to mingle with the porch
light. He turned, left, she heard
the front screen door slam, the glasses
clank on the table. Across the street
neon blinked "All Night," and water
echoed in the drainage pipes.

We scream at one another, hating.
He regrets my growing. Today as I
look at him in the hospital bed,
wires connected to his heart, I'm sorry
I didn't love him enough.
Outside the clouds file in
carrying September rain — we slide down
Wanyama knowing no cars will come,
and somewhere she watches out the kitchen window,
past the trees burning in the yard.

Leslie Tate

Petals

You move away
on the same blue breezes
that brings back summer's first fireflies.

Today —
we say the goodbye
that grew throughout spring.
It awakens between us —
uncertain,
as an opening bloom.

This is the day
to put away pictures and petals;
to pack away possibilities
and place them on the highest shelf,
where fingertips don't reach
even on the雨iest of Sunday afternoons.

The tiny yellow glimmers outside
are separated by stretching shadows,
where flowers lie hidden
and confused.

Sloane Frantz



Janet Ramey

Family Disturbance

They responded separately to the same call.

Each hoped they wouldn't be alone. Each knew these sorts of calls got messy sometimes.

Buddy was glad it was Big Charles who responded.

The whiteman and the blackman went to the door together. It was a house where a family lived (later, Big Charles would yell "shacks" at the houses).

The door opened, but the stream of abusive language didn't abate because of blue uniforms with large shields on the left breast pockets.

Two skinny youths swarm-out like hornets.

One carries a short piece of two-by-four. The large shielded chests stepped aside to let the rage out.

The boy with the two-by-four strides and spins around the small front porch. He swings the two-by-four. He slams it on the railing of the porch to punctuate his roaring disgust.

"Mama, you drunk?"

"Mama, you boyfriend drunk too!"

"He tell me to get the fuck outta my house!"

"FUCK YOU"

"Mama, he point a gun at me!"

"Mama, he point a knife at me!"

"Why he come to my house?"

His brother, no more than thirteen, starts to yell too. Similar fury.

They blow-off the steam compressed inside. They storm-off the porch.

They're drunk too, or stoned, whacked-out on something.

Big Charles did the talking. He was black. As a child on his way home from school, he ran from bullies in the exact same neighborhood.

Some of those bullies are just junkies now. Big Charles looks vaguely familiar to them.

He took no lip from drunken Mama or her boyfriend. They shut-up.

They gave him names, the boys, their ages, a brief sketch of the scene.

The boys are off the porch.

Big Charles yelled at drunk Mama about setting an example and thinking about raising her kids. He was sick of it. He was sick of these calls.

The two officers step off the porch and talk to the boys.

The boys are still hopping, but under more control. Speed-freaks probably have a term for it.

The story enlarges against Mama's boyfriend. He threatened them with a gun. He threatened them with a knife. They're bobbing and weaving around Big Charles and Buddy.

They gonna take-out a warrant against Mama's boyfriend. They gonna see him in court. They gonna prosecute him to jail. They don't need no help for that.

The boys' new Mamas stand and listen to the stories in blue uniforms with large shields on their left breasts.

Mama used to end the disputes with no T.V., time in the bedroom, no dessert.

Now, it's warrants and judges and district attorneys and convictions and suspended sentences and continued prayers for judgement and probation and time served.

Next, it will be a gunshot instead of a fifteen year old with a piece of two-by-four.

Big Charles talked quietly to the side with Buddy. Their presence was required to let the hot summer night settle again.

I don't know if anyone noticed the nine year old learning the traditions of Northside Lincoln Boulevard. He is watching with some of the other boys from the neighborhood who came to see the disturbance.

Cliff Mount

Annapolis Harbor



Steve Killian

Song for the New World

The hotel rose behind us
like a mast, like
a memorial to all the ships
that never left home.
Clouds soaked into a tide
hanging on the ebb. The sun
was a lighthouse
in Europe, losing ground.
Like I had dreamed,
there was salt in my hair,
sand in the tired wind.
But I didn't
take off my dress to fly
for a sail, catching the gulls, then
setting them free with
a shout. I couldn't.
You walked away on the path
of those ancient whales,
knowing I would die
for you, for wanting like death
to call you my own.

Donna Bowman

The Letters of Solitude to Jennifer

already, I can feel
the fears, cascading
chunks of ice and
brine sliding through
me, and I breathe again
the thick scent of sweat
the same sweat that held us
that rose off
the blackness
where our skins met

and still the ice hardens
great slabs echoing in the hollows
of my body
thudding in time to the litany
of our steaming breaths

while the words slip
smoothly past my vision
wraths of cool
shadow chanting over and over
the only spell we know
the spell of fire.

Scott de Marchi

the dust is growing stronger
my memories locked away now
you left on a spotted pony
and I cried big carousel tears
when you were gone
I look into your eyes
and I know that I knew
there WAS something.

Our lives are not mere sparks
in the world
but something stronger and brighter
and longer
but continuity strains relationships

my world is outdated
emptied imagination
you left me unwhole
bits and pieces
to die in my own
sin-puddles
and I cried that winter
as the snow melted
and you were gone
(just yesterday)
until I remembered
the spring yet to come.

Cathy Turner



Janet Ramey

Contributors

Lesley Bartlett is a freshman from Asheville, NC. She enjoys modern dance, and she is considering majoring in English. One day she might like to teach high school.

William Boles is a senior English major who will be in Worrell House next semester. He plans to attend graduate school.

Donna Bowman is a grim yet vivacious cyclist whose friends tend to be jolly creatures who enjoy quilting and snowmobiling. Donna herself is partial to Todd Rundgren, Athens, Georgia, and lurid paperbacks, especially those with raised lettering on the spines by guys named Ricardo.

Scott de Marchi is a SWM, seeking two SWF's to play "reindeer games" with. His greatest aspiration is to become a goatherder on the Tibetan highlands, and finally relieve certain tensions created by living at WFU for the past two years. He is currently living in exile in Huffman Dorm.

William Doyle is a freshman from Chattanooga, TN who has shaken hands with President Reagan. He likes English, but he gets better grades in physics.

Sloane Frantz is a sophomore from New Castle, VA who will most likely be an English major. She is a field hockey player for W.F.U. and a member of Lynks society.

Jeff Gillis is a senior from Huntington, NY.

Bonnie Gillon is a graduate student in history.

Martha Henseler is a junior from Carlisle, PA pursuing a Ph.D. in English. Her favorite quote is "to the next time we do this."

Eric R. Johnson is a senior from Rockville, MD.

Steve Killian is a junior from Glen Arm, MD.

Carl King is a freshman who enjoys writing, sailing, and winter nights by the fire. His parents wish he had never seen a camera.

Cliff Mount is a law student from Bethesda, MD. Yo Adrian.

Dave Olson is a junior from North Dakota, majoring in biology.

Michael D. Piscal is a senior history major from Tom's River, NJ. He is on the Wake Forest rugby team and plans to attend law school or graduate school.

Janet Ramey is a sophomore interested in photography and music.

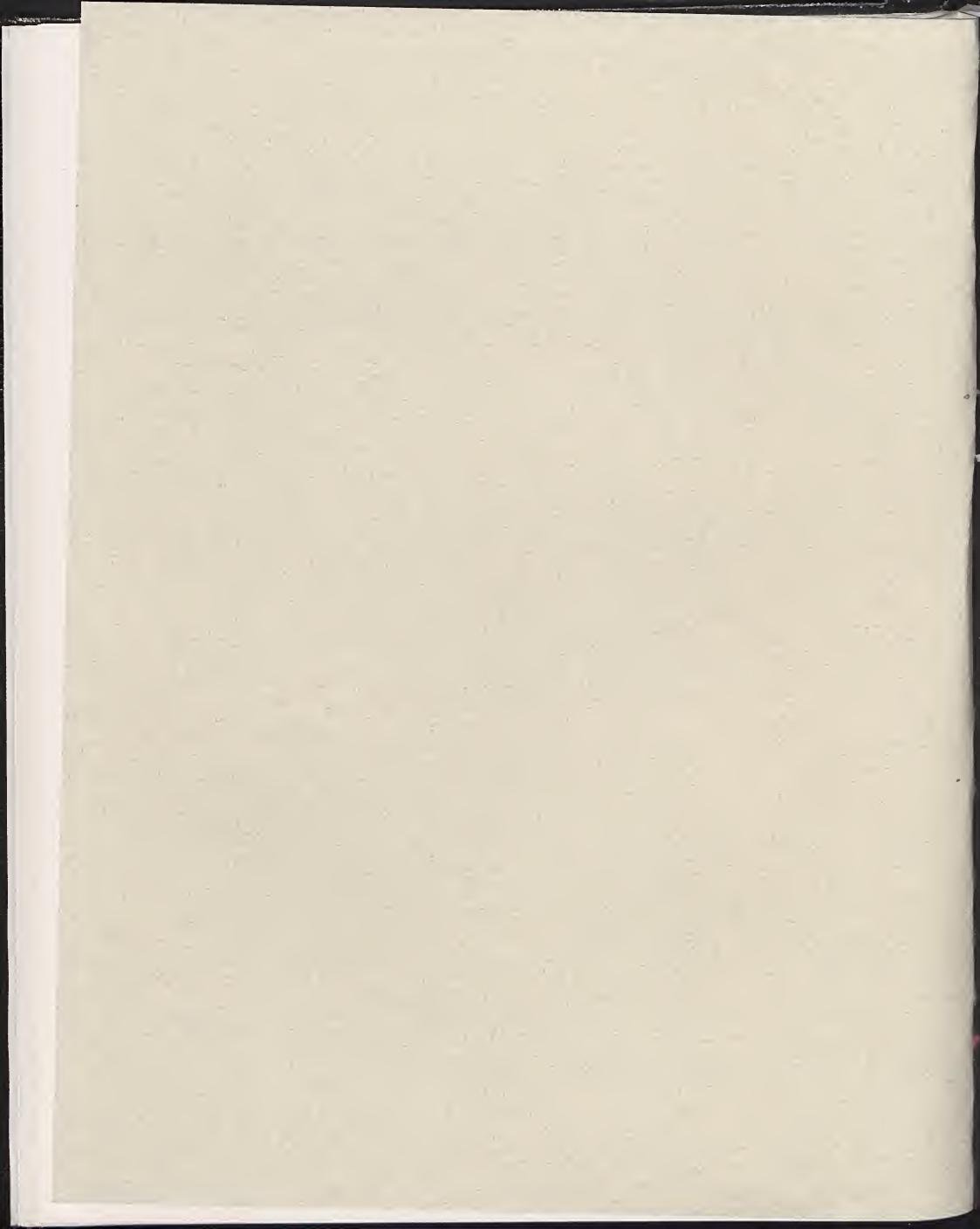
George I. Rose is a speech communications major from Alexandria, VA. His interests include sports, music, photography, and writing. He plans to work in banking and investments after graduation in the Washington, D.C. area.

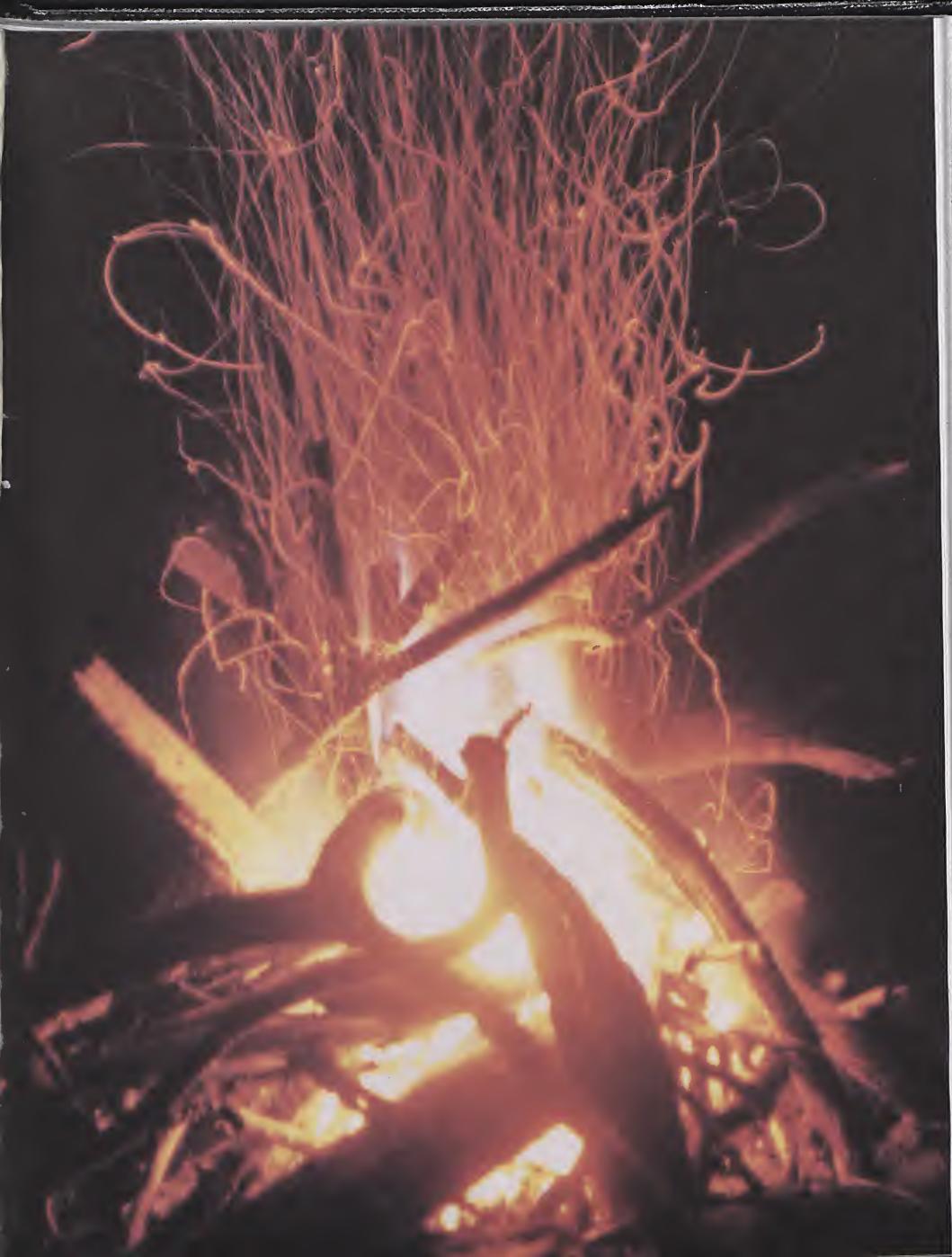
Chandran R. Sabanayagam is a freshman from Chadds Ford, PA.

Martha Sisk is a biology major from Roanoke, VA who thinks (probably) that she might attend graduate school next year. Neither biography writing nor resolution about major life decisions is among her better traits.

Leslie Tate is a junior English major from Richmond, VA. She placed first for collection of poems in the Academy of American Poets contest last year.

Cathy Turner is a freshman majoring in German and minoring in international studies. She wants to work in the Peace Corps after the Wake Forest experience. In a former life, she roamed the streets of Istanbul after having changed her name to Rosebued, in search of enlightenment and the true meaning of Tofu.





Front cover photography by *Karen Eller*
Burning of the Alice May

*The
Student*

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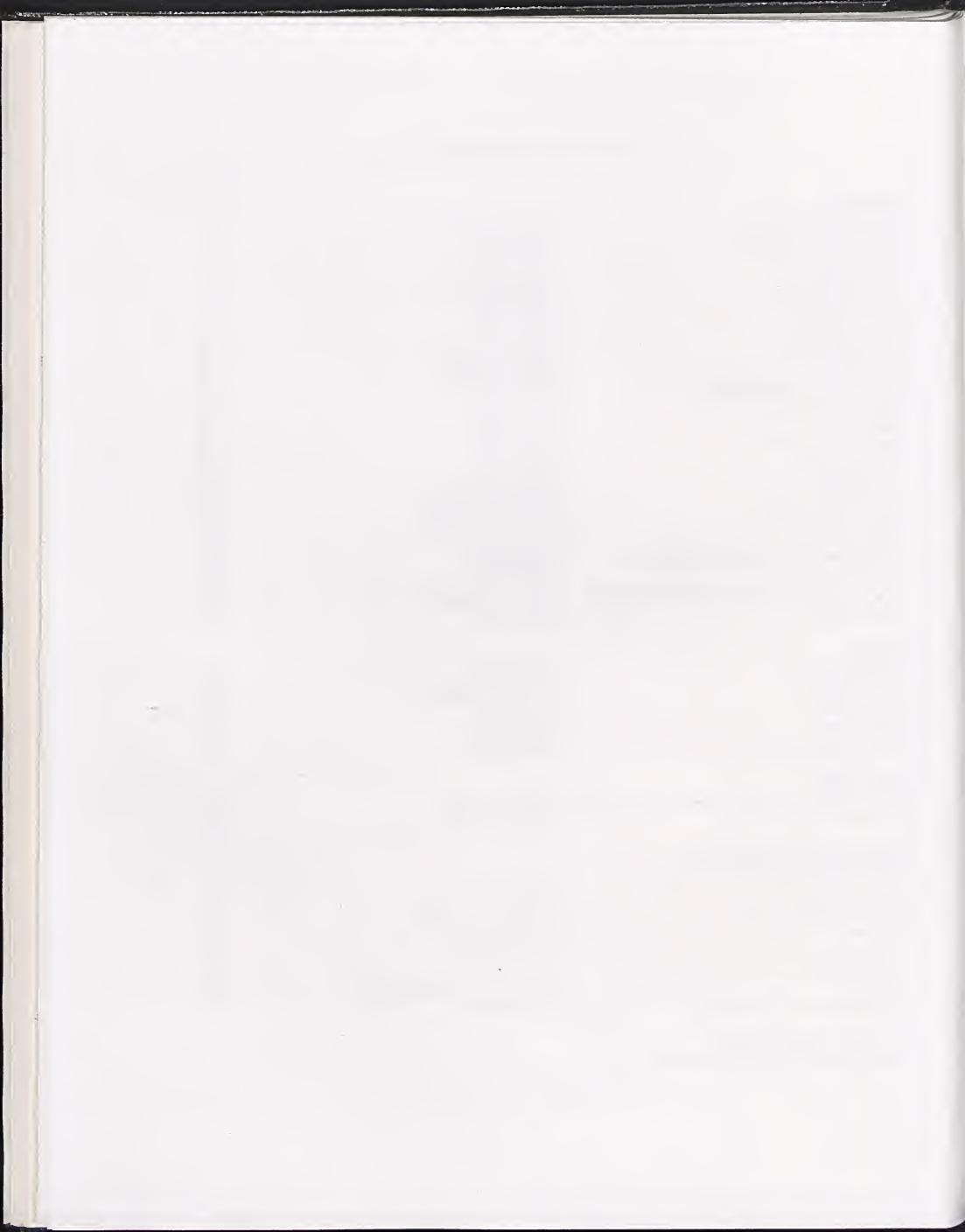
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** indicate prize winners

Members of staff are ineligible for prizes



A Moment in Time

Sitting, contemplating
all the factors of his existence
While cats howl outside his door.

Cigarette: lazily burning,
smoke slowly stealing into the air,
filtering the light above him.
Wondering where he's been, what it's meant to him,
how it's affected him.

Thoughts of responsibilities, duties,
obligations, joys and thrills.
Why does it seem he's never doing the things he
enjoys most?

A fan slowly turns behind him.

He is a bizarre mix of rebellion, longing,
and a vague dissatisfaction. He
hates and loves conformity. He
dreads what he is becoming, but
does nothing to stop it.

His fish watch him.

Brett Pawlowski

Mingled in breath into my lungs,
Toppled before my eyes,
Tendrils and tassles and taciturn tongues
Dissemble and disguise.

Combing my shelter, my shrouding and shade,
Aiding evading what my invade,
I bitterly skulked while ribbons played;
Under the frolic, I languidly lay.

Larissa Teigen

Second Prize Winner

When Worlds Collide

The song of the dragon drifts softly down the hills and crests
His solitary shadow dances among the stones,
As silver scales reflect the solar spectrum
The song flies further, and somewhere below,
a young maiden with golden hair and voice
unites with the lone aria and follows the melody uphill
Their delicate genesis ascends to the heavens, gaining soul
And the whole world pauses in time
His assertive tenor twists itself
around the splendor of her soprano
as gold entwines the diamond in a virgin ring of matrimony
Lifting her higher than reality; she swells his song
The music exceeds its apex, causing the nightingale to cry
Yet as the maiden approaches his recess, the song fades
and time returns to the earth
For dragons cannot exists in the world of mankind.

John Bailey

Help Wanted

I could tell she was a nervous woman;
she lit her cigarette with shaky flame,
fuel running low
inside.

Never did she smoke it-
just held on,
and filled the room
with stale air.

Her son, she cursed, was a burden at twenty-five.

Lost
at home
working odd jobs
(but regular hours).
Spent money on nothing fast
and answered to no one
-maybe just himself-
(but doubtfully).

A lot like her I thought when we met.
Quickly she corrected my mistake,
flashed a paper sealed in gold and dog-eared.

Diploma

she said.

Paper

I saw,
valuable as the morning papers
strewn about the kitchen table,
coffee stains in rings
around the classified ads
-help wanted-

Wished she had time for a job she told me,
put out her cigarette,
gulped her sugar-laden coffee,
straightened her terrycloth robe.

But her family depended on her
for meals and...

She struggled.
and housework...
I got up to leave.

and...

She fumbled for her last cigarette,
lit it with sparks,
and after contemplation
held stubbornly the empty shell
drained of content and purpose.

Carolyn Damiani



18

I lost my eyeball today.
It fell out while I was shelling peas on the porch.
Our neighbor's dog, Finnigan, chased it down the street,
but it alluded him by falling down the drain.
I can picture my eyeball now.
Sailing, a majestic white marble, through dark sewer passages.
Rats cannot touch it.
It floats by rapidly.
It reaches the river at the End of the world
and hangs there confidently.
My eyeball is always confident.
It goes places that no submarine will ever go.
It floats by things that are harmless, even formless...

But I miss my eyeball.
Such a nuisance really, to lose an eyeball.
So I call to it and as it floats by
I pick it up and put it in my pocket.
It will stay with me, of course,
now that it has seen the world.

Katherine Shepherd

Left: Pen and Ink sketch
by Rochelle Reeves

The Amoco Man

Amy Rawe

The light turned green. Feet fell on accelerators. Cars raced to the next stop light like little league boys sprinting from base to base.

"Come-on-COME-on-MOVE-IT!" The oversized station wagon in front of me timidly stretched ahead. I could only make out a greyish puff ball bobbing above the front car seat. I jerked my little brown toyota to the left lane and passed the crawling cat. The puff ball had glasses and wrinkles.

"Sorry lady," I muttered. "I'm in a hurry." Everyone was. Cars dashed and dodged among each other, eyes rarely meeting.

I passed the Minit-lube and whipped into the Amoco station. As my tires smashed the cord, bells rung urgently, summoning the attendant to come pump my fuel. Time, which I was running out of, passed. I looked towards the station wondering where the attendant was. Behind the gas pumps I could see the upper half of an older man moving towards my car. Moving very slowly. "Come on..." I mumbled.

Then he moved in front of my car and I watched him approach my window. His knees were turned in towards each other. His two feet seemed to twist and tumble over one another, toes landing and pointing in crazy directions. His movement was something like a warped waltz. He took one step forward, wavered for two shaky counts, and stepped again. It was the tempo of the slowest waltz - but it was not at all graceful.

"Hello there young lady! What can I fill ya with?" The man peered into my window and grinned freely. I looked back with wide eyes and a bit of confusion.

"Oh...unleaded, please..."

"O.K.," he said with a firm nod, and still that smile. I watched him in my rear view mirror. He maneuvered his way between my car and the gas pumps and turned the flow into the tank. He worked his way to a red CR-X that had just pulled in. Step, waver, waver...legs twisted...Step, waver, waver...

I saw his smile flash again. Window. Tank. Smile. Window. Tank. Back to my car

with that distorted dance. The pump clicked off. He set it back on its latch and moved to my window.

"That'll be \$12.16 little lady."

I handed my Amoco card and watched him move toward the office. I decided to follow him. Whether it was because I didn't want him to have to walk back to my car or because I didn't want to watch him walk I don't know. But he smiled again as I opened the greasy glass door and stepped inside.

He handed change to a man in a grey suit and answered the ringing phone.

"Ahmaco...Yeah uh huh, it's done...good as new...O.K. sure, bye-bye now."

Behind him applause blared from a black and white T.V. that sat on a shelf under another shelf stacked with oil cans and rags. Vanna White whirled across the screen, exposing four "N"s.

"O.K. now, \$12.16 was it?"

I looked back at the Amoco man. He had crinkly eyes and leathery skin with silver stubble on his chin and jawline. His thin white hair whispered on his head as his co-worker opened the door and passed through to the garage.

"Hi Tom."

"Hello there." He handed me the bill to sign. I took it, wrote my name, and handed it back. Curiosity spilled out of my mouth.

"You seem pretty busy today...how long have you been working at this sation?" I'd never noticed him before.

"Oh..." he drawled, looking up at the ceiling, "this is mah first year full time. Ah used to own a service station in Walkertown but had to sell it...And then Ah was in the diaper business delivery for 22 years." He had to quit that job because his leg was "giving out" on him.

"Ah went house to house and talked to all the new mothers. Ah just had to mention the little child and that always got a smile out to the mother... One or two words can change a person."

"And it looks like you have a way of making people smile around here, too," I said.

He held onto the counter for balance and shifted his weight.

"Oh Ah love to see a smiling face...We had a customer come in her one morning wearing that office frown on her face...ya know, she was down on the world. Well, I told the guys in the station, 'I'll get a smile out of her.' She stormed in here and I said, 'This must be the best day of your life because you had a beautiful smile on your face when you were putting that gas in.'"

Tom chuckled and leaned forward, as if to tell me a secret. He said quietly, "She beamed!"

So did I, and he nodded his head in approval.

A man with a black BMW came in to pay. Tom handed him a lump of coins and said, "Now YOU have good day!"

Two more customers whizzed in. He said to a black woman with a red hat, "Hi there. How are you today?"

"O.K." she said, fumbling through her wallet.

"How much?"

"\$9.80."

They discussed the contents of silver unleaded gasoline.

"That's \$9.40 with the discount ...enjoy your day now." A girl in black sunglasses, a white Wake Forest T-shirt and a leotard wanted to know something about an oilfilter. They talked, she smiled and was off again.

"Do you get a lot of Wake students here?" I asked.

"Yeah...we get a lot of Wake students. They're all good...well 99% of them are." He winked.

"Only one has been out of hand. It was a Saturday night and he'd been drinking. Well he asked me directions to someplace and Ah told him. He told me I was lying. Well, Ah told him to go try and if he got lost to come back and I'd carry him myself...which probably would've been better because he shouldn't have been driving like that."

Tom sent three kids through college himself. "That's what Ah'm most proud of...my children, mah family. Ah been married to mah wife Eloise for forty years...It's the simple things that mah kids remember, like the family picnics and hikes that didn't cost a dime...not the trips to Six Flags and stuff like that."

"And that's what makes life Ah guess," the Amoco man said. "Just the everyday goodness of life."

My smile was soft. "You know," I said, "that's so nice to hear in this stress-out, tensed-up world..."

A corner of his mouth curled up. The other side followed and a grin broke loose.

"Ah now...Ah know."

Reality slapped me. I checked my watch. Five minutes later.

"Well, I need to get going. But it was nice talking to you."

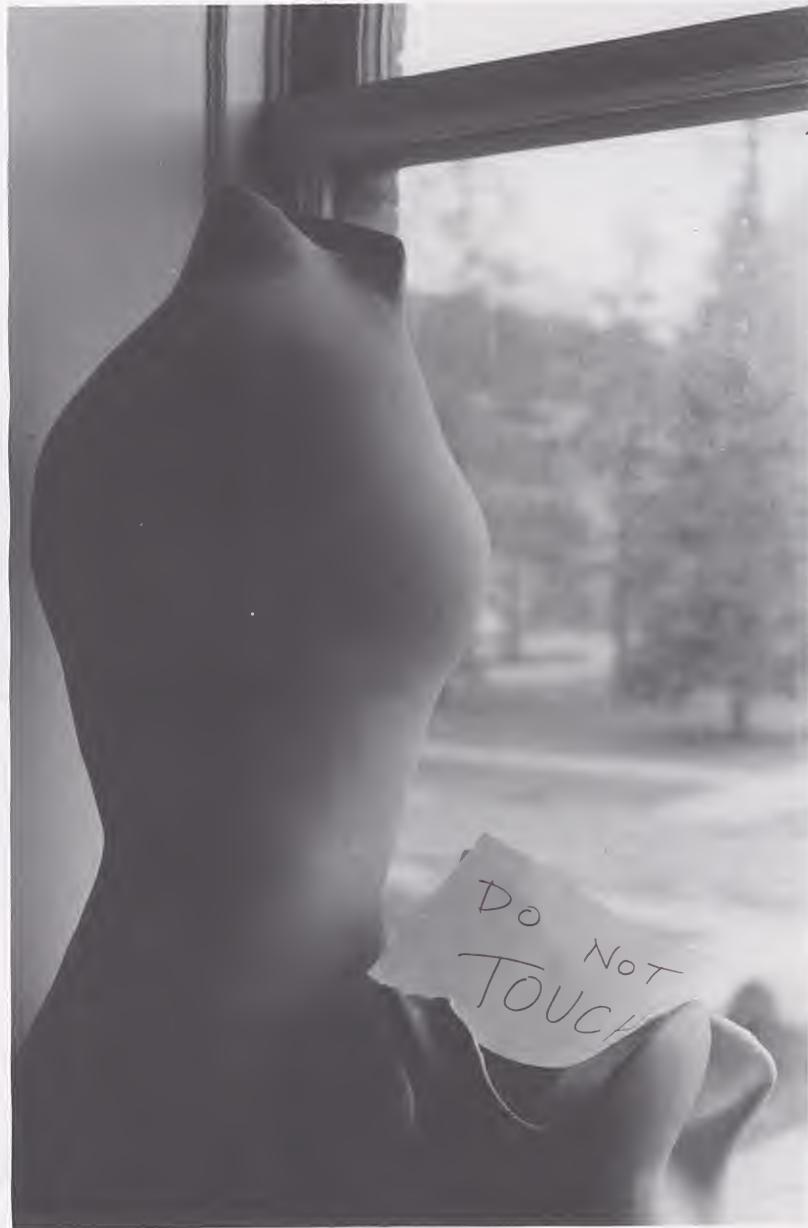
"Yes. You have youself a nice day now, O.K?". I jogged out to my car, jumped in, stepped on the clutch, and turned the key. Then I turned my head and raised my hand to wave good-bye to the Amoco man. But he was already waltzing his way to another empty tank.

Social Stupidity

Most girls are masochistic;
They fall in love with fools
Who soon take them for granted
And use them like plain tools.
So often are forgotten
The ones who long to love,
Whose hearts scream in confusion-
Who'd fit them like a glove.
Arrogance is rewarded;
Stupidity is praised;
Devotion is discarded;
Those who hurt are raised.
They think they're far above us,
Although they'll crawl below.
And Reality seems futile
To those of us who know
That many more deserving
Are often just passed by
For proud and haughty idiots
At whose sight the girls sigh.
It's strange that social standing
Is picked by build, not care-
That those most often admired
Have trouble counting a pair.
But things just never seem to change,
And I can hardly see
Why people who most want to love
Spend all their time lonely...

Chris Ritcher

Right: Do Not Touch
by Christopher Toombs
First Prize winner



Last winter (1987) brought the tragic news of the deaths of John Killens and James Baldwin. These two writers were strong voices in the literary circle and their messages of freedom reached out to all peoples--black and white. In memory of their dedication and faith we recognize James Baldwin and John Killens and pray their words will echo and be heeded until the issues of prejudice disintegrate.

John Killens
Martha Henseler

Born in Macon Georgia on January, 14 1916, John O. Killens was raised and educated in the South. He attended Howard, Columbia and New York Universities and founded the Harlem writers guild as a major figure in the left-wing literary movement of the 1950's. His best works include Youngblood, And Then We Heard the Thunder, 'Sippi, and The Cotillion. He wanted to "change the world, to capture reality, to melt it down and forge it into something entirely different." In his novels he told "as much of the truth as he knows the painful truth to be, and let the flak fall where it may." He was most inflexible in his belief of socialistic realism maintaining truth to be the only reality. John Killens focused on past and present socioeconomic forces and racial prejudices that inhibit the development of unity among black workers. The most profound aspect of his works is his love for his people, revealed as his inspiration and strength.

In his most famous novel, Youngblood, the characters insist blacks need to stay in the South and fight for their rights. The novel is set in Georgia and investigates the injustices encountered by Africans in the Jim Crow American South. Killens like Richard Wright, never faltered from his belief in unity, and the strength of the whole to develop the potential of the Black People. His novels provide moral and political affirmation that the revolution of black history, culture and youth is still viable in creating a new future sparkled with joy, unity, and blackness.

Killens provides an image for his audience and shows the similarities with other people of the world, crushing barriers and racism. His national-universal literature insists upon universal unity not just unity among blacks. In an article, The Black Psyche, Killens wrote, "The American Negro, you see, is an Anglo Saxon invention, a role the Anglo Saxon gentleman created for the black man in this drama known euphemistically as the American way of life. It began as an economic body expedient frankly because you wanted somebody to work for nothing." Killens does not focus on destroying those factors breaking up our society, but nurturing those which will lead to a united nation. He believed firmly in the future, and had faith in the people. His love and respect for dignity, unity and potential of the black people will continue to encourage others to take up the search for those factors which will unite us as one people.

James Baldwin
Martha Henseler

One day James Baldwin went into a restaurant and ordered a glass of water. The waitress looked at him blankly and said, "We don't serve negroes here." All the snubs and insults of his Harlem life culminated and he threw a mug of water on the waitress and ran, terrified by the anger he carried in his heart.

Baldwin eventually left the United States, escaping to Paris where he wrote for forty years. He produced more than twenty books, seven novels, four plays, and five collections of important essays. In all his writings he very clearly addressed in a new way what it meant to be black and also to be white. In his autobiographical novel Go Tell It on The Mountain James Baldwin dealt with his father, a minister so angered with prejudice he beat his children. Baldwin, however, became a minister himself at age fourteen and this colored everything he wrote. After Mountain, Baldwin wrote a collection of essays entitled Native Son in which he concluded: "each generation is promised to get more than it will get, which creates in each generation, a furious, bewildered rage."

In 1957 some French friends asked him to explain the situation in Little Rock Arkansas where US troops were called to escort black children to school through screaming white mobs. James decided he had to go to the States himself. Never having been to the South Baldwin wrote, "The South always frightened me. I wondered where the little children got there strength--the strength in this case to walk through mobs to get to school." These days of Rosa Parks, James Meredith, and Martin Luther King, Jr. saw James Baldwin organizing, encouraging, and seeking to "bear witness to the truth."

In The Fire Next Time (1963) Baldwin expresses his determination, "never to make [his] peace with the ghetto, but to die and go to Hell before [he] would accept [his] place in the republic." This fiery prophet wrote, "White people in this country will never have quite enough to do in learning how to accept and love themselves and each other and when they have achieved this--which will not be tomorrow and may never well be never--the negro problem will no longer exist for it will no longer be needed." Baldwin's whole mission was truth: to define it, and see it intertwined in society. His precise poetic language, his eloquent gestures, and clear uncompromising, brilliant speeches spread his truth with power and commitment. He was never defensive or apologetic for the Black race. He became the righteous witness.

Though James Baldwin was taken from this world, his words insistent and brave, will remain to always inspire new minds to follow and elevate the struggle for human freedom--black and white. As long as racism exists so will a part of James Baldwin and if it vanishes maybe we can thank him.

The Icarian Dream

How high can you fly Icarus, how high?
As high as my wings will carry me.
How far will you fly Icarus, how far?
As far as the winds will take me.
You know they don't want you to fly Icarus.
My goals know no boundaries.
Icarus you see the storms arising.
My wings will outpace the wind.
You see the psuedo gods of Earth fear you coming.
Let them see their empire crumble.
Icarus you should heed the warning songs of earth.
Those notes are the sounds of cacaphony.
Icarus your Brothers denounce your traitorous flight.
Let them come with me or remained enslaved.
Icarus the world may not yet be ready.
Time does not abide ignorance.
Icarus you see the sun is rising.
Then let me introduce the new day.

Eric Ashley Hairston

Mourning Glory

Dank in dew,
Of heavy hue,
Bloodless, baned, and blue.

Taking two,
The both of you,
Upon your flesh I strew.

Scarlet new,
Stains petals' rue,
And paints your dying due.

Slaughtered ewe,
As murder's clue,
Where Glory glumly grew.

Larissa Teigen

A Chapel shrouded in the mist.
Raindrops fall.
Not one reaching the earth
At the same time as another.
Tears fall.
Caused not by the same reasons
or by the same pain.
A question.
Silence, for no one knows the answer.
A lie.
Silence, for no one has the strength.
Naive and weak
We stand.
In the rain.
How long will it last?

Frank Maslanca

Death Of An Oatmeal Cookie

O, oatmeal cookie, purveyor of happiness,
Little Debbie has condemned you to death.
You and eleven friends are thrown together
Like cattle before the slaughter.

Oatmeal cookie, you come to me
As the veritable picture of innocence.
You have committed no crime against me;
You are sinless, a victim of circumstance.

I see you, oatmeal cookie,
Not as what you are, but as what you are to me.
You are a frightened and confused soul,
Yet I see you as a light snack.

I hold you in my hand, oatmeal cookie:
I am your judge, jury, and executioner.
I finally hear your cry and see your plight,
But I shall eat you anyway.

Brett Pawlowski

Miles

stretch and walk
momentum spreads
feet pound cracks into chasms
the first sphere of sweat
collides with pavement
the tall grass reaches out
slashing at passing muscles
tiny castles of salt
a loose shoestring strikes numb ankles
heavy air hides an elusive breeze
only desire--refusal to stop
continues the motion
flashing shells race past
eating those miles only too easily
sanity begins to slip

the finish visible
almost...
there!
the body stretches once more
and the dance of life ends.

John Bailey

Stage Six

Come walk with me

Where my Father's breath
gently flows
across fields
of green.

Where His voice thunders

with the crash
of waves
upon the shore.

Where He creates music

in the silence
of the coming
of the dawn.

Come walk with me, child

Down a road paved with stone
with sand
with gold.

Through streets filled with beggars
and merchants

and clowns.

Into a house rich

or poor

or abandoned.

Come follow me.

Where the people bow thrice toward Mecca

Where they deny body for Soul's Liberation

Where they shake with his Glory

Where they sing Hymns of Praise.

Follow me there

Into the darkness of a heart

Where I have been turned away

Where Love has been strangled

Where pain has driven off all hope and light.

Walk with me

For I am Lord

And I dispel darkness

And I bring forth the Light.

Come, follow me

To where my people live

To where I died

For you

My People.

Amy Trottier



Basketball, No Hoop
Christopher Toombs

A Fairy Tale

Sherman J. Hollar

A young man lifted his pen, while he was writing, the night's humidity had crept in unmercifully through an open window. It had kindled a sagacity inside of him.

He read and reread his poetry, over and over again. Each time he read it he would contemplate whether he could risk sending it. His arms fell to his sides as he lapsed into exhaustion. He had written into the wee hours of a hot summer night, almost reaching the point where he felt he was writing unconsciously. He has attempted to allow the beauty of the apparition he had envisioned earlier that night flow through his body, somehow trying to force himself to become an antenna which would enable his image to transubstantiate itself onto the page, untainted by his mortal hand.

...a handsome young poet once fell in love with a beautiful young ballerina

They met at a gala party for some aspiring artists...

When he had finished, the young man paused again before signing his name. It seemed so futile to him. He knew nothing would ever come of it. The thought was just too great-the fantasy was as intangible as the girl had seemed to him just hours ago. Could he bear the rejection? I am an artist, he thought, and here I sit writing a thing reminiscent of "Do you love me? Yes or no. Check the box." It seemed so sophomoric.

His predicament should not seem unfamiliar to any of us, however. It was the conflict we continually face when desperately desiring something but being forced to think twice before running that chance of humiliation. Yet because of his disciplined effort to break through the wall to a higher consciousness, he knew it was more than that. He weighed the risk of attempting to grasp the intangible with the possibility that his romantic sense of the sublime, that thing which lies on the outer rim of consciousness itself, might be crushed forever. If the young man didn't send it, he would always have that image of her,

locked in his memory. He asked himself if that could be enough. He rationalized that in real life could not possibly live up to his exalted image of her. He tried not to think of the elegant ballerina doing the menial things like shaving her legs, waxing her eyebrows. No, this girl could not be real. Upon the stage that night she had been the personification of the harmony which flowed from the night air onto his page. He couldn't allow her to be real; the mere though of it reeked with sinfulness. Possibly it was this temptation, this mountain daring him to climb, which appealed to the poet's latent desire to fulfill that role of Satanic hero. He reasoned that the most beautiful thing about life is that we can see what we want to see; we can make our illusions become real if that's what we really want.

It tortured him, taunted him. He had to prove to himself that he could make her real. After all, he was an artist of enormous talent. H could make anything be what he damned well wanted it to be. His illusion of her, he felt, was already captured on paper. He had to capture her physical being for himself. The young poet felt like doubling over when he signed his name and slipped the letter into the envelope.

During the days that followed, the young visionary tried in vain to rid himself of the image which danced in his head; it was an unforgivably recurrent dream. Three uneventful weeks had passed when at dusk one evening, he returned to his quiet dwelling to find an envelope, crispy white with black lettering, in the box on the front of his door. As he clutched the letter firmly in his hand, he still couldn't shake the ambivalence he felt coursing through his very anxious state of consciousness. Really he didn't know what to feel. He was just satisfied to have garnered some type of physical response from the apparition he now considered 'his ballerina'.

He placed the letter on his quaint antique coffee table and just stared at it. Then he began to look about the room. He realized as these few years passed and he had become

humid; his light perspiration gave his skin a favorable ruddiness. The pair stood for a few moments, staring at each other silently trying to figure out just what they were really doing there. It should have been awkward, but the novelty and romance of the situation made this aspect obsolete. They were truly taken with one another, with their own curiosity.

"Hello."

The voice! The voice! The young man became acutely aware that with every passing moment she would become more real. It was something he would enjoy immensely, almost sinfully. Her voice was one more dimension to a being which just seemed to grow more heavenly as time went on. So far, everything had fitted in place. The voice sounded like her perfume, she looked like her voice, she smelled like someone who would look like that. It was perfection, he thought, unbelievable so far, but so good, so real.

They walked. On the way, she asked him about his craft and about why. It all comes down to that three-lettered word doesn't it? Why did he choose to write poetry, why did he write about her, why was he such a genius, why was she there, why did she look so beautiful, why did she have to look so divine on stage, why did she dance with so much grace, why did his life always seem so unreal, why was she his last hope, why did he write her that letter, why did she write back, why did he open it? Why is why the only question we can never answer?

It was a brilliant conversation they had as they walked aimlessly throughout a park which bordered the haughty environment of the prestigious university. He told her about the night he had attended her ballet and how he had felt as though he were actually watching Beauty itself. That afternoon they held forth for hours, never tiring, but always a certain wall existed. A boundary, if you will, which neither one dared to cross. It was too dangerous; both sensed it. What they had was a kindling for a burning love, a self-destructing love, a Romeo and Juliet love. It would have been too real, or maybe too imaginary. One may choose according to how they answer the question: In which domain lies Heaven?

The young man, as he learned more and more about the divine creature parading in front of him, still yearned to capture her, in both reality and essence. It was a sinful

desire, he accepted that, but it was a real desire. He thought about all those fake people who marry for money or in some other form prostitute themselves and then profess to know about real love. They don't know anything about life, he thought, or love or anything else. They lived in a fantasy world, where they themselves are fake but are surrounded by the real world. He was real but was surrounded by his fantasies and imagination. Which are you, he wanted to ask the her but didn't.

She told him of her pain and he showed her his scars

He filled her head with sweet compliments and she playfully teased him.

She inspired him to the heights of creativeness

They watched the sun set on a hilltop overlooking a sublime horizon. It was then she told him she was booked for a late flight into La Guardian. His countenance was unmoved by the news. He really should not have wanted more. He offered to drive her to the airport, but she said no. Her luggage was at her friends' apartment off campus, and they were expecting her. He asked if he could walk her there, mumbling something about it not being safe for her to walk alone. All he really wanted was a few more precious minutes, precious minutes of real life. Or artificial life? He couldn't tell the difference anymore. She took his hand, and for the first time, they touched. For him the reality was four-fifths complete. All the senses had been satisfied, except one. Of course her skin was flawless, soft, and caressable. It was like everything else: The sight of her divine form, the sound of her melodic voice, the air of her hypnotic perfume. She was almost complete.

It was then that the poet accepted the realization that he had created her. She was merely the embodiment of an ideal. The ideal had been there all along, throughout his entire life. She was momentary; she was the words on paper. The ideal was the *thought* that put them there. It was no one single ideal. It was just The Ideal. He could explain it about as well as he could explain the girl. He just knew it, like he knew he would always love her. It needed no explanation.

The young man also knew, though, that he could never hold reality or an ideal or even the

girl in his arms. Each was indeed an intangible. What he had been doing, writing poetry, was as close as he needed to get. This would suffice for now, he thought.

When he reached the steps of the apartment building, he reached over and kissed the young ballerina. The bittersweet taste on her lips allowed him to transcend his reality for that one moment. With a smile she turned and vanished behind a door, to be forever beyond the poet's limitations of perception.

He wrote he a love poem and she just danced away.

a country of pillows

People, the richest, the fattest,
 the healthiest, the best.
Contentment makes pillows of
Men.

The most brains, the best schools.
We think that conquest is in the tea leaves,
 Autumn fires of past dreams cast hazes over destinies.
 Golden brown, bright yellow--ashes, like us.

Lane Fresh

Whose Reality?

*Right: Pen and Ink sketch
by Rochelle Reeves*

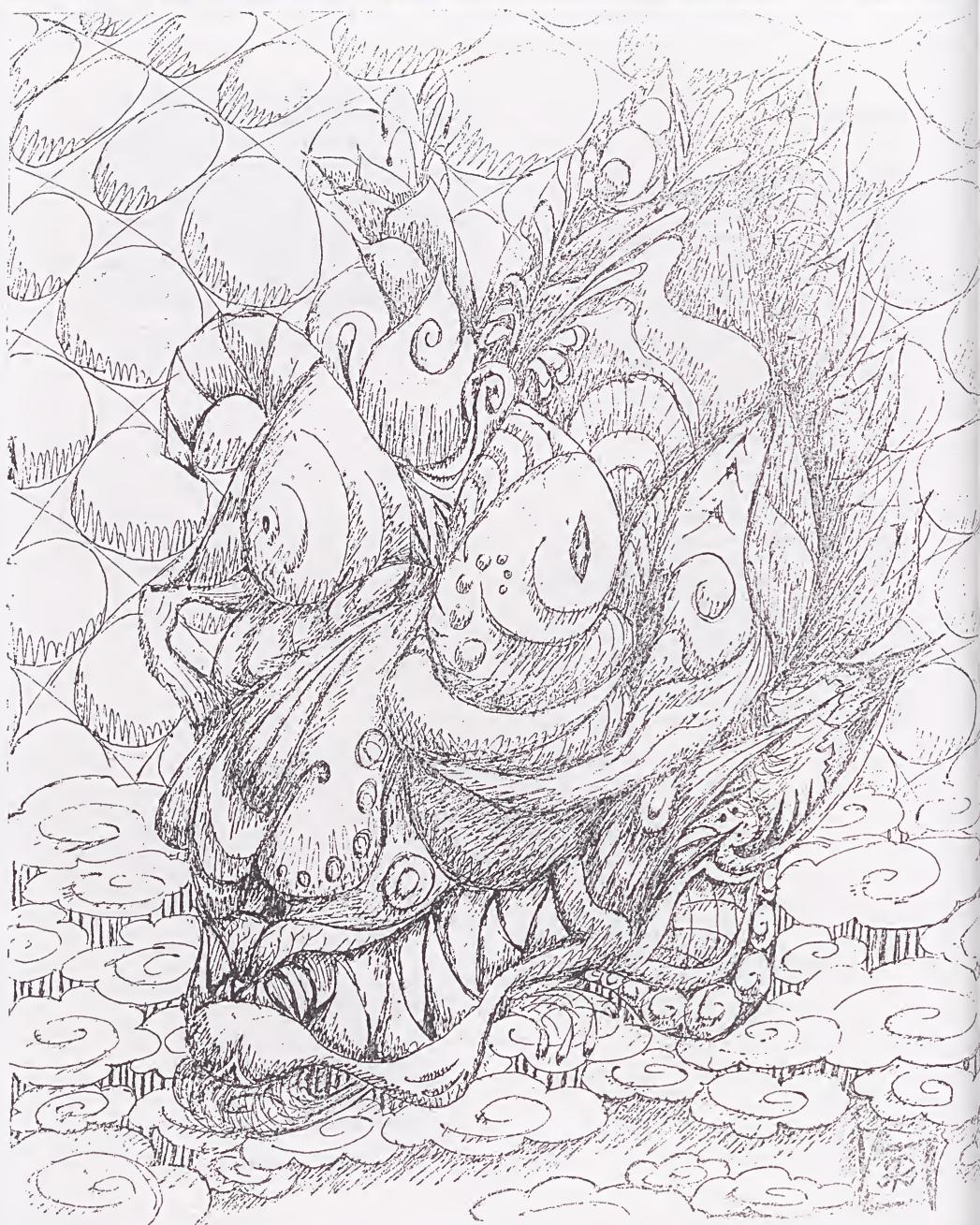
Welcome to my padded room.
Are you frightened by the gloom?
People say that I'm insane;
They claim I have a twisted brains,
But life to me is so abstract-
Reality is surely cracked!
You say I do this just for show,
Bot all of you refuse to know
'Who am I?' - did you take the time
To see what answer you could find?
To see the moaning person there
Whose highest goal is you nightmare?
I cry out through the darked air,
All alone, in cold despair.
No one knows me- no one see
How I grasp all realities.
It is me or you who's scared-
Who destiny had cruelly dared?
You act so righteous-you can't see
Why others are in misery,
How Fate has crushed what they have planned;
You don;t try to understand.
So leave me here within my cell;
My illusion blocks my Hell-
But when you feel cold fingers touch
The 'Reality' you love so much,
Then, my friend, you'll truly see
Reality ain't what it used to be...

Chris Ritcher

On Meeting

And I'm drugged
with the forgotten feeling of calm
And ease
That exists only when I let myself roam
Without a dream
And without a guide
Just a mind blown open
From inside

Carolyn Damiani



My mind wanders through the shadows
Of watery darkness - dim light from above
Sea fronds gently wave, beckoning me onward
The heaviness surrounds me
It cannot breath - -It suffocates
In softness
Loving liquid hands caress it
My body relaxes
My pen falls
My mind travels on
Leaving calculus far behind.

Catherine Caldwell

Mardi Gras parade
Wishes upon confetti stars
Falling from the sky

Shelleigh McVicker

WRITERS' CORNER: Ed Clark

Martha Henseler

Ed Clark, born in Lexington Kentucky is a Junior at Wake Forest University. He is an English major and author of the musical comedy The Love Treaty, which was performed in Diversions last Spring. Interviewer Martha Henseler talked with him about his interest in playwriting and his future plans.

The Student: Can you tell me a little about Love Treaty and its success?

Ed Clark: Love Treaty is a musical comedy just loaded with silliness. The cast was all Wake students, which made a fun performance since the audience knew the cast. The cast had a grand time acting and singing and carry the silliness to the fullest. It was just a fun affair for the performers as well as the audience.

Student: Is the Love Treaty your first musical?

Ed Clark: Yes, I wrote it the summer after my freshman year and finished it during my sophomore year.

Student: Do you have a particular reason for making your first play a musical?

Ed Clark: Actually it is much easier than a play. I can say so much about a character or give the audience history in a song. I don't end up forcing a lot of dialogue which can be a mess. The plot moves along quickly when put to music and scene changes can be smoother. Basically when things get sticky I just break out in song!

Student: Did you write the music for Love Treaty?

Ed Clark: I took piano for a year so I can plunk out the tune I want. But I worked with Eddie Timanus, a student at Wake, to polish the music.

Student: Do you have plans to publish Love Treaty?

Ed Clark: I submitted the play to various theatres this past summer. The larger theatres had no use for an upstart play. But some of the smaller theatres sent it back with practical suggestions which I'll use as guidelines in my next play. For example, the cast is really too large and there are many set changes. My next play only has two characters and one setting. A company in Oregon seemed willing to review the Love Treaty after some revision. But publishing the play was not the goal, I just needed some suggestions to structure my next play. The pleasure of it was that my play was actually read!

Student: So you have already started your next play. Could you give me a sneak preview of this one?

Ed Clark: It's called, believe it or not, Railway Ties. As I said there are only two characters, male and female, and one set. I got the idea for the plot from a country song. It was an odd song with an electric guitar and a country sound. The mix intrigued me. The play has a rather "wild west" twang to it. I hope to open Railway Ties in the spring. If I can make this play as good as Love Treaty I feel it could make it.

Student: So this is a play, not a musical, inspired by a country song? I'm curious, what are the characters like?

Ed Clark: Well, the woman is an astrologer.

Student: An astrologer? So you have the background to credibly create such a character?

Ed Clark: Actually I don't know anything about astrology. But that doesn't matter in this case. She is not a technical character running around speaking about the stars and their properties. I used her to demonstrate how big space is and how small people are. She simply

has to be an astrologer. I submit to my characters, they don't submit to me!

Student: And after Railway Ties will you continue to write plays?

Ed Clark: I will turn to writing fiction. You know strive to write "that novel". I do not think I will give up playwriting because I consider the play to be the perfect union of thought and action.

Student: What is your actual goal, that one thing you want to accomplish?

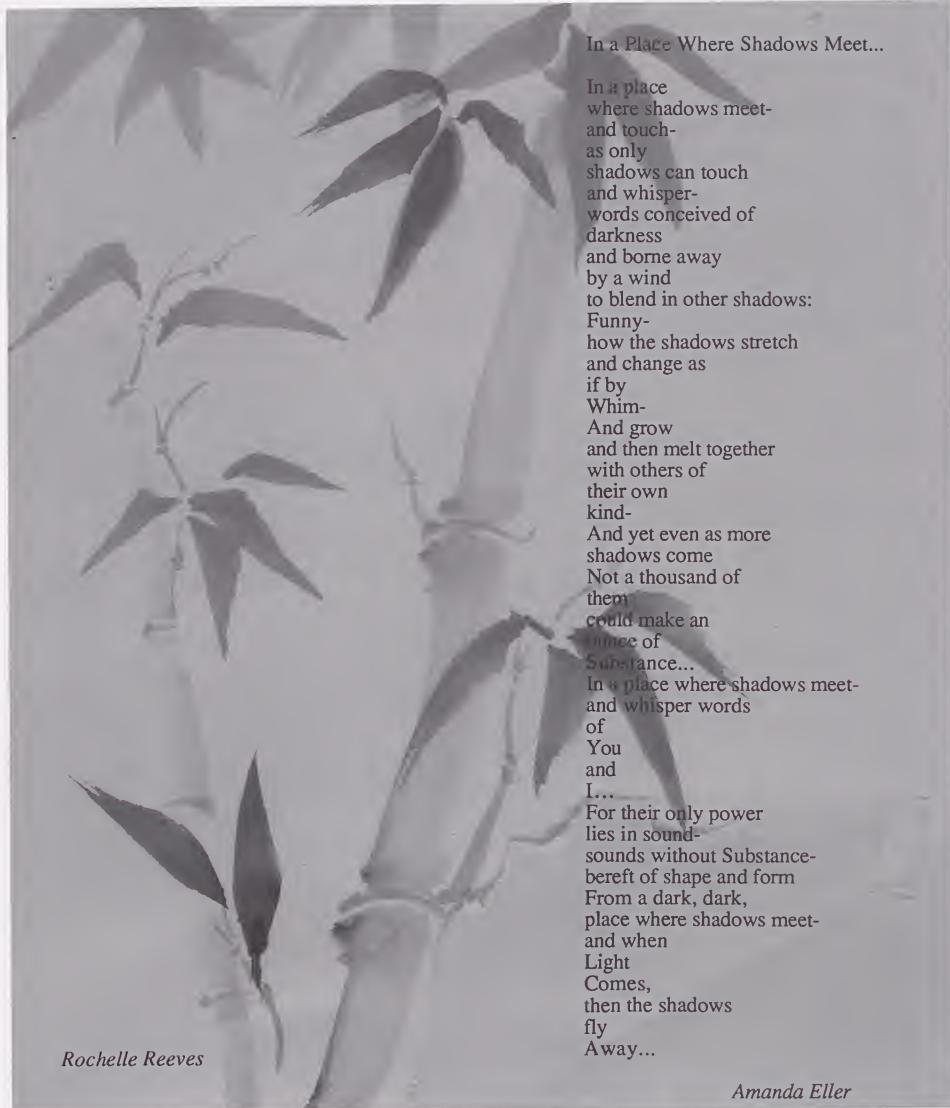
Ed Clark: I would like to be rich and famous before I graduate! No, seriously, though, I

consider myself moderately intelligent and hard working. I would like to take a year after I graduate and just read and write. Then, much to my parents dismay, I would like to study mime under Marcel Marceau. I have two mime courses here and enjoy the art. I don't know that I have a specific point I want to reach. Life just forces you to be flexible. I know my life as a writer won't make much money so I'm sure I'll have a different job. But what I really want to do is share with other people what I feel and understand. I really don't expect anything from my plays but I just want to share everything I can.

Falcon's Flight

Silent wings,
of a sharp-beaked bird,
Soaring the heights of his tether-bound freedom
Off for a while,
now back to perch to wait;
To wait for the one,
the one who loves and feeds,
To take away the line and open the spiral
Giving way to flight though the clouds of heaven;
Listen,
Whistle,
Plummet to earth,
Down,
Down,
Down,
To perch on the one's arm,
Tetherless, but bound.

Sean Brennan



Rochelle Reeves

In a Place Where Shadows Meet...

In a place
where shadows meet-
and touch-
as only
shadows can touch
and whisper-
words conceived of
darkness
and borne away
by a wind
to blend in other shadows:
Funny-
how the shadows stretch
and change as
if by
Whim-
And grow
and then melt together
with others of
their own
kind-
And yet even as more
shadows come
Not a thousand of
them
could make an
~~un~~ce of
Substance...
In a place where shadows meet-
and whisper words
of
You
and
I...
For their only power
lies in sound-
sounds without Substance-
bereft of shape and form
From a dark, dark,
place where shadows meet-
and when
Light
Comes,
then the shadows
fly
Away...

Amanda Eller

London Bum

Amy Rawe

He's there again. and why shouldn't he be? It's his home, his haven. I wonder if he ever ventures away from it - this dingy corner he lives in at Charing Cross tube station. He's been there for months now. it doesn't matter what time of day you go to call on him; I've always found him there.

I wonder if he carefully chose the bile base. (Perhaps Londoners are more generous at Charing Cross than Covent Garden.) Or did he once just collapse there and hasn't moved since?

His rumpled, ragged clothes are not worth describing in detail; they are colorless, shapeless. In fact, I often thought he crept up right out of that hellish station soil. A neglected weed. He blends in so well that hurried gardeners overlook him. He isn't plucked. He isn't watered. But he survives.

His face is a stubbled canvas of ground-in grime and his hair is like a tangle of thick frazzled yarn. He reminds me of a crumpled piece of paper that has been thrown in the corner out of frustration. Scribbled on, scratched out, and thrown away.

I did notice him the first time I ran through the station with my friends. But I didn't stop to pick him up because we were going shopping and I just didn't have time. And

anyway, he disgusted me. Why didn't he just clean himself up and get a job?

But the next time he caught my eye. (Maybe he recognized me?) I was drawn to him. His eyes are not savage, or even pitiful. They are gentle, not resentful. His eyes aren't even full of apathy, as I expected they would be. His eyes are calm, soothing. They suggest a deeper secret - a wisdom he has and I don't. I stopped to notice. My friends yelled at me to hurry up. I reached into my coat pocket and pulled out a pound, tossed it onto his welcome mat, and ran on. I looked behind me to see if I had changed his life or even given him hope. He was still looking at me. His eyes were still calm, even unimpressed. And he still knew something.

I always gave to him afterwards, not because I'm a socialist or a bleeding heart or anything. It's just that I have and he doesn't. One time, in my haste, I almost forgot him. But he called out to me. "Ello love...goh-a pence for me?" Oh yes. And he gave me a grimy smile. My friends told me I was throwing my money away - that he'd just spend it on booze. But I didn't give to make a difference. I give to the eyes. Because they see something that I don't.

Luckless God

Commanding the deluge of life-
Cleanse!
Rushing rain sweeps the ground,
the thundering of an approaching cavalry.
Steadily rinse,
at least drain the sky-
Desperate tears
blacken dirt,
nourishment for Eve's temptation.
Our Holy Redeemer washes the soil,
yet creates mud.

Elise Walker

kristina rose

Sonya Bourn

There is nowhere to put it. I am going to come back when there is a place for it to go or a place for it to stay for a little time. But I don't really know if I should keep it or not. I remember that it is not what I am supposed to have but no one knows that it is here in my room so...I am careful to forget where I put it if anyone asks me and they I will remember-when it is after juice time and I am by myself. Maybe if there are a bunch of tomorrows and they are days when I am allowed to leave it well be a parade day. People will be glad to see me and a have a parade but I don't know many people except the lady with the eyes like pudding and the little boy who is like the dark and Miss with no hair on her head 'cause she is ever badder than me (I have more hair).

But as long as He is not here there will be no reason to make "little sprinkles"-like Miss calls them-maybe He won't be back until all the todays are gone and all of the fun tomorrows are finally here. Miss says there will be great tomorrows for all of us but she may not get to go to tomorrow. I hope that she does get to go to tomorrow. I hope that she does get to go even though she is so bad that everybody must call her very bad and very stupid. I do not think she meant to be stupid but just isn't sure if she's stupid or having fun.

People with no hair must be very bad but I know that I am not so bad anymore because I go to sleep and have almost all of my hair and soon I might get a brush if He lets the blue 'vister' lady get one for me. The blue lady is

my favorite lady because you can smell her so good from any place in the room. But she must help me remember not to eat the chalk.

He will come back sometime 'cause he does not stay gone long 'cause Miss is such a bad person that he must yell and be here all the time. He tells me that I am like Miss but I don't think so 'cause I got lots of long hair but I don't have it with me just now 'cause he cut it off very much so that I cried and now I probably won't have to save the ribbons off the boxes in the garbage so that I can put them on the hair I don't have just now. I must remember not to eat the chalk.

There is a place with a door and handles that do not shut sometimes 'cause nobody slams and sometimes I go in there when I am asleep-but not really 'cause I pretend-and can crawl through the hole in my door. It is next to the room where they make you hurt 'cause you are bad and you need to be a good person. I feel better when it hurts me and I am a big girl and don't cry as loud as the little boy who is like the dark. He must be badder than me 'cause his hair is even shorter than mine which is not long and can't have ribbons in it now but was long before now and might be tomorrow.

When there is no more light so that you can see who you are and Miss starts screaming then you know He will be back and today will be near the time when you must not be awake after it is the time when you cannot have your eyes open. Don't eat the chalk

What's That Knocking 'Neath the Ground?

What's that knocking 'neath the ground?
Such a grim and dismal sound,
A rap, a knock, a screech, a moan,
And here I stand--Alas, alone!

Such a hellish howling here,
I know that something draweth near,
Yet I stand amidst the graves
Of witches dead and bloody knaves.

At last I sprint toward the trees
To watch from 'neath the rustling leaves,
And there I see (from forest's edge)
Something crawling from the hedge.

While the others lie in slumber,
This one dares to lumber.
'Tis something horrid, something dread,
Something ghoulish, something dead.

She peers at me with eyeless pits
As something deep inside me flits,
For she walks toward my place
With lipless grin and rotting face.

But still, to move, I dare not try,
Though the Lady draweth nigh.
Mesmerized by cursed charms,
I am lifted in her arms.

At the moon I vainly scream
To renounce this bloody scheme;
But still I'm dropped into the clay
Where she and I shall ever stay--

Now I'm knocking 'neath the ground,
Such a grim and dismal sound.
I rap, I knock, I screech, I moan,
For here I lie, no more alone.

Robby J. Spriggs



The Recital
Christina Berg

Status Alpha

Night so sly and stealthily slinking
Cast its spell upon my thinking.
Down to the darkness I am damned--
Without a panic,
Sinking, sinking.

Down Cocytus I am sailing
With tainted souls that are wailing.
Demons laugh on every side,
And close behind are
Claiming, claiming.

On Phlegathon the flames are reeling
And seem to me somehow appealing,
As I sink beneath their gyre
Towards the fate they're
Sealing, sealing.

Down Ach'ron I find Charon rowing,
And it is I that he is towing
With others who are surely dead.
Our tears of woe are
Flowing, flowing.

Melodies so madly ringing:
Damned dirges, incubi singing.
O eternal, horrid night!
It is my doom you're
Bringing, bringing.

Loathsome lyrics I am learning
While towards the music slowly turning.
Singing now with blood-red eyes
While my friends are
Burning, burning.

Upon the Styx I am swearing
Allegiances to the flames a'flaring.
The pact is signed; the book is closed.
All rationale is
Tearing, tearing.

Symbols sealed in words of rhyming.
My psyche screams at Death's bell chiming.
The sun lies just beyond the bank,
Climbing, climbing.

One river left so swiftly streaming.
Things are not what they are seeming;
Lethe has delivered me...
I was only
Dreaming, dreaming.

John Bailey

First Prize Winner



Chandran R. Sabanayagam

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chandran R. Sabanayagam".

The Witching Hour

Chris Richter

I was only eighteen when I sold my soul...I'm not speaking allegorically; I'm talking about dealing, demons, and damnation. Only eighteen years old then...but then again it's a wonder they waited that long...

My tragic flaw was undoubtedly my insatiable curiosity. This characteristic, coupled with a refusal to accept without trial, has made my life a rather perilous one. My childhood interests/fears in ghosties and ghoulies led me to questioning; questioning led me to research; research led me to more questioning. And it all adds up to belief...and trial of course.

I became, in my own right, quite adept at the arcane arts. I acquired the ability to tap, if only for an instant, the unfathomable depths of the soul, to twist its energy to my will, to perform trivial displays of 'magic'. But always I could taste the full potential of my newly-found 'toy'. When I knew enough--not all that much actually, but enough--she was sent to me. I feel the term 'succubus' just can't be applied to her, for she was very human...very carnal. Perhaps her kind is at the root of that word's origin. But in any case, she was to be mine. She had been dabbling in the occult, just as I had, and unknowingly had left herself open to the influences that she couldn't and wouldn't stop.

It had been a particularly rotten first year away at school, and for a long time, the summer had stood before me as a lengthy stay of execution. I was trapped at a college deep in the heart of the Bible Belt. The girls of this fine institution were mere replicants of those of yore--only filled with sub-zero emotions and willingly--conformed with the sub-zero emotions and willingly-conformed concepts. Needless to say it was a lonely year with a winter particularly colder than I was accustomed to. How ripe I was to be plucked from the tree of rationality! I was even more anxious to resume my arcane practices, since I had been completely stifled religiously for the past year; I was very intuned to the presence of warm-blood females, which had long been a fading memory.

I had been home for less than a week when I decided to go to the weekly dance at a nearby Catholic school, St. James High, which had been a high school tradition. It was a warm evening in mid-May, and the full moon had just appeared in the sky when I arrived. It promised to be a worthwhile night; the social opportunities were to be limitless, undoubtedly.

I saw her in the middle of the dance floor as I entered. She was rather difficult to pass over, dressed in a short black skirt, tight black sweater, black hose. She even had her fingernails painted black, and they were quite long, which had been a fetish of mine ever since.. well, recollection is unnecessary now.

I noticed my friend, Steve, a bit to my right, and I went over to where he was taking off his jacket. Now Steve was a case. We had both begun delving into the occult at about the same time, but aside from that point we had little in common. He had relied too heavily on the research phase, while I had been experimenting with my own theories concerning the occult. As a result, Steve held many views which I found quite conservative, unnecessary, and wrong. He's now a cartoonist, but then he always did over-employ his imagination, especially when it came to himself.

Nonetheless, I had gone over to Steve, who was now helping his girlfriend, Wendy, remove her jacket. After exchanging greetings and trivialities, Steve told me that they had someone they wanted me to meet. We slowly weaved through the crowd of gyrating youths, pausing from time to time to acknowledge the existence of other acquaintances. We finally reached a break in the song and stopped. I looked up only to see the girl who had been so effective in enchanting me as I had entered. She gave me a quick wink and began talking with Steve. Steve turned and notified me that this was Isabelle Morais, a senior in high school and a close friend of both Steve and Wendy. He, of course, presented the converse introduction.

Isabelle Morais--the name rang out with mysticism. She was American, although both parents were from Lyons. She had been a fine choice; I often wonder how much effort had been required to locate the fleshly interpretation of my own image of perfection. Her figure was awe-inspiring; there is no other way to describe her body than to stoop to heresy and to claim she was flawless. She was all I had searched for...and much, much more; for she was more than I would have been arrogant and foolish enough to dream of.

But her body was incredibly the least of her beauties. She was of medium height, a few inches shorter than I, as I like. Her curly chestnut hair fell over the left half of her face. This gave her a shy, innocent look which at the same moment conveyed the impression of an ever-present wildness which lurked just below the surface. Her facial features were delicate and lovely; they lulled one into a tranquility and admiration which only was averted from totality by a glance into her eyes. Her eyes...I've always heard the eyes are the window to the soul...Isabelle has cold, crystal eyes the color of sapphire, texture of the sky on a day free from clouds. The beauty of her eyes was even further enhanced by the darkness of her pupils. Once caught in her gaze, I was locked inside until she blinked with her slight smile, mocking me with the realization that she had granted me my freedom...for the time being. But she always retained a part of me, pleasures have their prices.

Isabelle said, "It's a pleasure to meet you; I've heard so much about you." She flashed a smile that made my senses reel. Surely this was some cruel joke; the reactions of the ice-women at college had only made my disbelief more pronounced.

"Let's dance," she said and pulled me beneath the surface of the crowd.

We danced, and it was here that I first noticed the intensity of her eyes. At first it was just a glance, but I couldn't break away from the power of those eyes, but why would I want to? She slowly, almost tauntingly turned her heads towards mine and smiled again, but this was the knowing smile of release. My heart stopped for an instant, caught in some bizarre sense of ecstasy.

For the next three hours I was alone with Isabelle in the middle of the filled dance floor.

It was not that traditional concept in which one feels merely isolated from those around him; I saw and could think of no one but Isabelle. Then it was done...We stood in an empty gymnasium, and life would end. Yet, I lived...it had just seemed natural for life to end at this moment; it was time for us to part.

I found myself walking her to the car where Steve and Wendy were waiting for her. She hugged me tightly and placed a brief but eternal kiss on my cheek. Dazedly, I heard her whisper into my ear, "Call me?"

"Yes," my lips answered, "Good night, Isabelle." And she left.

I got into my car and sat for a while, frozen in thought, feeling at the same time both wonderful and dejected. Had I presented myself well? Was I overreacting to signs that could well only be of friendship? I just wasn't sure of anything. I started the car and left with the lyrics of Journey's "Who's Crying Now?" running through my head.

*'It's been a mystery And still I try to see
Why something good can hurt so bad Caught
on a one way street The taste of bittersweet
Love will survive somehow, somehow...'*

I had always been so very poetic and romantic in my approach to love. As a result I was easily hurt. Was this just to be more of the continuing saga of lost loves? The bright full moon smiled down at me, the uncaring smile in the eyes of a vulture as it sights a dying man...

It was morning. I could barely wait to tell my friends Jim, Dan, and Mark all about Isabelle; much of the futile outlook I'd experienced a few hours before was now gone. We met at the diner, and they took every cheap shot at their disposal as I related Saturday's events. I told them of how long I had lain in thought, in confusion. With a momentary lapse of seriousness, they all agreed that they thought Isabelle's apparent interest in me genuine, and I was almost convinced. Jim mentioned that I looked rather worn. I said that it had been a long night, only hinting at the extent to which my sleep had been plagued by dark and disturbing dreams. It was Jim who suggested we call Peter and hold a seance, just like we used to do so often.

Ah, Jim, he was so eager; his soul, so innocent. Of all my friends he was without a doubt the most like me in so many respects, but in so many aspects to a lesser extent. His desire and nonconformity were in constant conflict with his strong sense of right. He wanted to feel the energy of chaos coursing throughout his entire being, but could not. He was eternally doomed to be the anxious observer, and yet this point did not deter him.

Dan was quite another story. He had the interest, but no purpose for it. He was mischief personified, possessed of a covert evil. He was not a malicious character, but his desire for quick progression in the occult was obvious; it was also this characteristic which prevented him from any true advancement.

Mark had originally only wanted the discipline and metaphysical benefits of occultic involvement but had sunk deeper because of our friendship. He had accepted the role as my "student" in the occult. For his own safety, though, I had instructed him more in ritual than in practice. What he knew was more white than black magic.

Last, there was Peter. Pete had been a football player in high school. In him I had always seen a structured and well-channeled evil. I was with Sean and him in the night they had both sold their souls, somewhat unknowingly. I had never told anyone else, but I had witnessed a change in their behavior. But Sean was dead by this time. It hadn't been a coincidence, I was sure. I feared Pete for all his potential to hurt others, but somehow I sensed that he would do me no harm. It was as if he had respect for me in that area.

It had been these different influences which all though high school had created the ideal combination for a potent seance. And now we were preparing to rejoin our forces, each for his own reason. It was dusk as we entered the decrepit house we had often employed for the same purpose.

I felt that old familiar mix of apprehension and twisted glee as I sat in the center of the floor collecting my thoughts and energies for what was to come. I lit the five candles and we joined hands, although we knew this was merely useless ritual which provides no protection whatsoever. Initially, it had served its purpose, but we had practiced for too long for it to matter now.

As always, I led the group's descent. "Look at the flame...watch its gentle, methodic flicker...let the energy flow through you, becoming one with you...close your eyes and draw in the warm energy that it gives out." There was only the soft whisper of steady breathing. It was beautiful, mesmerizing. The air seemed alive and sentient as it moved around us, docilely caressing our bodies. There was no Outside World, for all was lifeless when compared with the silence of the night.

"Before you lies only darkness...only darkness...call out into the black...into the silence...bring forth deeper gloom." More silence...

All of the sudden Peter whispered, "It's here." And it was. Pete, who sat to my left, shook, his face filled with an odd mixture of pain and satisfaction. And yet it was I who heard and recognized the voice. But the voice was my own. And I saw the room and its contents as though I was far away.

"Yes, I am here!" My voice called out in a tone not wholly earthly. But the sounds of the world faded from my consciousness; the sights of the room faded as well. Around me was only darkness...and a strange bliss. Through the mist I could see Isabelle, sitting on a bed in a room that I couldn't recognize. A voice, the sound, texture and quality of my own, said, "You can have her, such a small fee! To kiss her lips, to feel her body close to yours, to be the all of her desire! Such desire..Or you can refuse." A sharp pain bolted through my chest. "NO," I screamed in both worlds, "Not her; Don't do anything to her!" The sound of fading laughter was my sole echo.

I was being shaken. Far off, but nearing voices called out my name. I looked around and through my tears saw my friends. "Are you all right?" Mark asked, "for a while, there nothing we did could bring you out." I nodded, actually stretching the truth considerably, "I'm fine." And they helped me to my feet.

We said nothing all the way home. I dropped them off and returned to my own house. I ran upstairs, picked up the phone and started dialing Isabelle's number, but I replaced the telephone. I was shivering. As I lay down on the bed, the phone rang. I answered only to hear Isabelle's slight French accent at the other end, "Hello, Christian?"

"Isabelle, are you okay?" I asked, not even knowing myself why I had inquired, "I've been worried about you."

Hesitating, she answered, "I'm all right, why?"

"...I don't know."

"I had a great time last night, thanks," she said. Apparently she had dismissed the oddity of my greeting. I hadn't realized how lyrical and delicious her voice was. "I wondered if you would like to come visit me this evening; I'd really like to see you."

Needless to say, it took me a moment to catch my breath to sufficiently reply, "Sure, I'd love to."

I hung up after getting directions and saying the appropriate closings. Looking in the mirror to assure myself that I wasn't on the same side as Alice and the Mad Hatter, I anxiously prepared to depart.

Even the not-quite full moon seemed to sing out its congratulations as I drove; it had lost the foreboding nature of the night before.

Isabelle lived in a beautiful Victorian home—the kind that always has a penchant for being haunted by a horde of demons in those cheap productions which somehow find their way out of Hollywood from time to time. I strolled up the walk and pressed the doorbell, expecting to hear it chime out Bach's Tocatta and Fugue in D minor or the theme song from Psycho, but it was much less dramatic. I heard the sound of approaching footsteps inside and Isabelle opened the door, dressed attractively in red and black.

She invited me inside and I stepped into the eighteenth century Lyons. The house could easily have still been a part of France. With the frequent exception of modernity in the form of technological advances, Isabelle's home was perfect in its French atmosphere. I was simply awed by the classic elegance of this home.

She led me through the living room and downstairs to the lower floor which housed the family room and her bedroom. This area was slightly more modern in decorum. We sat on a long couch and talked for a while. I voluntarily sealed in a dream. How could this be real?

"I thought maybe I'd made a bad first impression last night; that was the last thing I wanted," I said with a little difficulty.

She smiled, and with a wink said, "Au contraire, mon cher. I was charmed."

"You're not alone in that sentiment," I wanted to say, but "I'm glad," was all that came out. But she looked as if she understood and was satisfied with my vague response. I wondered why she confused me to such an extent. I usually could read people pretty well, but Isabelle—I couldn't place it.

"You scared me a bit when I called earlier. Whatever was the matter?"

"I don't know, really; I suppose I had dreamt it or something. I was just concerned about you." I don't know why I couldn't tell her, except that I was just used to maintaining my beliefs as an unknown factor to all but the closest of friends. But she asked me no more.

"Do you want to see my room?" She asked, lifting herself and then me from the couch. We walked across the den to her door and went in. The walls were maroon, and odd color for a bedroom, but it was beautiful, nonetheless. It seemed disturbingly familiar though.

We sat on her bed and talked for a while longer, and I learned more basic information about her. She had lived in Lyons until she was six years old, when her father had accepted an ambassadorship to the United States. She was planning to remain in the States after her graduation that year, although her parents would return to France soon. We spoke of those meaningless matters of everyday life, which for some reason, always bear such a weight of importance.

Looking at my watch, I noticed that it was almost 11:30. "I need to go, you have school tomorrow."

"Yes, and all fine people should be home well before the Witching Hour," she replied with a grin and a melodramatic glint of evil in her eyes.

We walked to the door, "I've had a great time, thanks," I told her.

She gave me a hug and deposited a warm kiss on my lips and said, "Good! Me too. Call me tomorrow?"

"Of course," I answered with conviction, and walked out to my car, turning to wave good-bye to Isabelle, who still stood at the door.

I guess at this point I had fully accepted the fact that in another scene or two I would open my eyes only to find that this had all been an

exquisite dream. How real dreams could seem! But life must exist within the realm of Reality, and this scenario did not apply. Nonetheless, while it lasted, I should enjoy it!

Jim had phoned while I was out, so I returned his call. "How are you feeling tonight, man?" he asked with something odd in his voice.

When I questioned why he'd asked, he told me all that had happened during the seance. "I" had been speaking in languages that in no way resembled English, and objects in the room had moved or levitated. Three-scratch marks had appeared on my chest halfway through. Checking, I noticed it was so. Then I had begun crying as if in intense pain and had started screaming, "Not her," again and again. Obviously, this was an eerie feeling. I assured Jim that I was all right, told him about the evening's events, and hung up, still pondering his story. What did it mean? But the answer was hidden from me. I fell asleep thinking of the seance and then of Isabelle and then repeating the cycle. The cold moon watched over me as I slept.

My dreams, as well, alternated between pleasure and pain, between sacrifice and seduction. After having already awoken twice, I got up about three o'clock in the morning and looked out to where the entire area was draped in the chill blue light of the moon. It gave a ghastly life of undeath to the land.

Turning, I thought of my Tarot cards and went to my desk. They were as I had left them the year before, wrapped neatly in black silk, in the back of my drawer.

It's apparent that I had many various and sundry metaphysical beliefs at this point in my life. At one point-not too long before-I had been as much sceptic as doubtful. But now I know...Anyhow, after about a year and a half of little more than playing with Tarot cards, Peter's father had shown me the style he used; I tired it and lo and behold, a Tarot reader was born.

I sat on the floor, concentrating for on moment on the energy of the cards. I slowly unwrapped them, ritualistically respectful. I folded the silk and placed it on the floor. Shuffling the deck, I thought about Isabelle, about all she made me think and feel. A chill ran down my back- a chill like that which had signified a presence, way back when I had first begun my "spiritual" growth, but that response

had been long gone, so I dismissed it as imagination. I deliberately laid them out on the floor before me in seven sets of four-each set symbolizing a progression of time. I read the cards, set by set, astounded as always by their accuracy. From a perfect description of the recent past and present there unfolded an impressive plot. All cards pointed toward completion, that attainment of the ultimate happiness and passion. But peppered throughout were cards which made no apparent sense at all: the Tower- a card of ruin, Death- the card of loss or sudden and violent ending, similar others of lesser suits, and ...the Devil- the card of black magic. It has come up before in readings about myself, but maybe, I thought, this was just some of my own influence seeping into my reading.

A cloud moved across the moon for an instant, and a piercing gust of wind blew through the window, scattering the cards. I cursed aloud and picked them up, wrapped them, and replaced them in the drawer. I went to sleep shortly after getting into bed.

Often one feels that he is more watching his actions than initiating them. It is not a permanent sensation, of course. It's a feeling of being out of place in familiar surroundings.

Well, that's how I felt for a good part of the week. That man down there who had the same name as I, spent the week eating, sleeping, visiting my friends, and calling Isabelle. He arranged for Isabelle to come to our house Friday. And it wasn't until about Friday that he and I assumed a joint identity once more.

I picked her up at around six o'clock; we were going to a restaurant before returning to my house. She looked divine dressed in a dark blue skirt and black and silver bodice.

As she got into the car, she told me I looked different-it was something she couldn't place. We drove, talking of the week's events and other trifles. All the while, though, I was thinking how my attitude toward her had not been altered at all by further acquaintance. I was still in awe of her both physically and socially. Often after a short time of knowing someone, the nature of a relationship is determined by our attitudes. If we see only the body, forgetting things that are said or feelings of the other, it will be locked into a physical relationship. More often, though, especially in

friendships, we forget what a person looks like, seeing their bodies only as shells of the personality, with no distinct features. It is a lust for this side which is true love. But, for Isabelle, I felt attraction to both aspects, with neither diminishing the other. I thought to myself that this could finally be a "What?" I heard myself say.

"I said, 'What are you thinking about?'" she said with snicker at my lost concentration. I winced inside, thinking of how that question was at the root of the death of so many relationships. Truth is a valuable quantity, in need of being appropriately rationed. "Nothing, and everything," I answered, obviously dodging the question.

"Fair enough," she replied, showing no sign of concern or agitation. I breathed a silent sigh of relief. "That's not a safe question, I know; it's just easy to forget."

"Thanks," I said, and we pulled into the parking lot.

At dinner, she ordered steak and oysters, turning to me with a quick grin. I made the connection at once; I had always wondered how aphrodisiacs work. I caught myself smiling back, whether I'd intended to or not.

We got home to my house at eight o'clock. My parents, being understanding and aware ones, had gone to the shore and would be back at one. We watched some comedy film on my VCR; she cuddled up with me, which made my following of the plotline a task and a half. I was certain that the thumping of my heart would drown out the sound of the television, but it didn't.

After the movie had finished, I invited her up to my room, apologizing for the mess. She sat down on the bed and took a slow inventory of the room's contents, pausing on occasion.

When she finally spoke, disrupting the song which was being composed by the silence, I could sense a curiosity which had been tempered to appear milder. "You have an interesting taste in literature, I notice, quite a repertoire for the provoked mind."

I, not completely comprehending what I read in her, said, "I know it's not the most varied collection of books: horror, fantasy, and science fiction, for the most part. "No," she said, still holding something back, "I was referring to more to those on the top row: Simple Hypnosis, Necronomicon, The I Ching, Rituals of Candle-burning,

Demonlogy, A guide to The Tarot, Dr. Faustus' Autobiography, as well as Aleister Crowley's Lovecraft, Lavey?"

This was an immensely uncomfortable moment; until you're confronted with it you have no idea how many blind-faith, witch hunting religious people there are out in the world who could not fathom a slight aberration in their version of the Big Picture. "Just a passing interest," I said quite unconvincingly.

"No, you don't understand," she said taking my hands, with the hint of a smile, "I've read some of these too. I'm just amazed that someone else in the area would read them, even if you don't believe."

Hesitating, I said, "Oh, I believe, all right. Four years of pretty intense involvement have insured that." And I was silent, not knowing if I'd committed the deadly faux pas.

Isabelle, who had been looking rather wistfully at the floor, peered into my eyes and smiled just a bit, saying, "You're wonderful," and hugged me, holding me tight. "But this makes things different," and she sat back on the bed. Her eyes shone, revealing the forming of tears.

I didn't understand what was wrong, but I decided it was better not to press at this time. I said, "It'll be all right, Isabelle. It's okay."

She walked over and put her arms around my waist, seemingly recovering her composure, and said, "Yes, it is okay." She looked into my eyes without lifting her head. "Sometimes I just feel like it's not me anymore, like I'm not in control, but I am. And you know what? You, mon amour, should take more control. You shouldn't accept things as they occur." She pulled me yet closer, "If you want something you must take it!"

And I kissed her. It was pure breath of air that gives the heart sustenance to conquer all. It was as if it were again my first kiss, like all others before had been base, unclean deceptions. Her soft sighs were bonds of eternity to my ears; they were delectable, as though they were the only sounds my ears had been meant to clutch onto. I felt her passion's intensity flow in waves, energetic crescendos and delicate decrescendos. And her fingernails...she would lowly draw them up and down, gently...teasingly. Just when I knew I would shout out, the respite would

reach its completion, and our passion would climb again. She was warm and respondent to my caress. Then, when we both lulled to a spot where we were barely brushing lips, she enfolded me firmly in her arms.

I slowly opened my eyes, fearing to free myself from this wondrous enchantment. She drew back and looked steadily into my eyes, somehow telling me that I was alive...that I was awake. She lightly put her hand to my face and kissed my cheek. She sat down on the bed, still holding my hands.

"Je t'aime, mon cher...", she whispered. Her eyes sparkled in the light of the moon, which sent its slender beams through the window.

"I love you!" I screamed over and over, but my lips were still. When finally my lips were unfettered, the words were barely audible, "I love you Isabelle..." and I dropped my head, as if in defeat.

She tenderly lifted my head so that our gazes met and said, "It's good that it is mutual, no? You are everything to me, so guard well my heart and soul."

"Yes," I said, and the clock downstairs chimed midnight. I started, suddenly aware outside sounds still existed.

She looked at me and smiled. "Time for all good little girls to be home snug and safe in their beds."

And I took her home. She kissed me good-night. "A demain...call me all right?"

I nodded, watched her move up the walk and go inside, and drove home, feeling somewhat unprepared for any form of slumber.

Isabelle invited me to her house on that Saturday afternoon. I sat upon her bed, as she gazed unwaveringly into my soul; I felt as if I could not conceal anything from her, nor could I harbor a desire to do so.

"What's wrong?" she said suddenly. "There is a darkness in your soul, a feeling of bewilderment."

I, who was quite taken aback by this awesome display, could only answer, "Bad remains from my last seance, I suppose."

"Do you hold these seances often?" I nodded. "I would be interested in participating in one, if that is alright."

"No! ..no," I answered immediately. "I have your soul's safety to think of as well as your heart's, after all, right?

"Yes, but I think I am quite able to protect myself." As she softly said this a piece of paper on her desk crumpled into a ball, seemingly of its own volition. Isabelle looked just a little taxed, but grinned timidly nonetheless.

"So it would seem," I answered, yet unsure of what I had witnessed. "Very well, then, I'll ask my friends when they're available."

She didn't appear to have heard my response. Instead, she stared through me as she went on, "Sometimes I get so tired, like I can not go on. When I started I had no idea, no clue what I was getting myself into-not that I really do now." Her eyes and face had lost a little of their glow as she continued. "Ah mon cher ami, you frighten me just a bit. You remind me of someone I know; I can see him in your eyes from time to time. Maybe it's just your similar interests, for it was he who started me in the occult. His soul had a fire and an anger at life, much as yours does. He was just a friend, don't think I am speaking of anything more." She leaned back against the wall and stared out the window. "I didn't have the benefits of choice, as you have, for I did not learn things for myself, but from others-others who, as well, had long surrendered their options. You cannot understand. But while you find Reason in your practices and have spent long hours doing so, I was taught that Reason is an obstacle. For what logical reason could one find for this?" The ball of paper on the desk burst into flames and was gone, leaving no remains or marks.

She turned to me, her eyes' illumination returned. They housed a simmering temptation and energy, which was by no means unattractive. "In you I see great potential, greater than that with which I practice. I see an acceptance of your existence as a shade- your perseverance to stay a step from absolutism. But you cling too much to your Reason. You give of yourself but limit your gains because you cannot accept the possibilities. But you are safe, and my time is that quantity which for me is limited, for I wasn't taught to use logic here. Only belief...and desire." At this, it appeared to me that she took on an even more vibrant look-more full of life, and I was a little uneasy.

"But this is silly," she said, and she was magnificent. "We are wasting the precious

evening in idle chatter." She put on her most seductive visage. I took a short breath, understand that there would be no one on earth I would ever find as lovely as Isabelle Morais, no one else could ever possess my..yes, my soul. It was hers.

She leaned over and pressed her lips to mine, and it was as if a sweet power was flowing through my entire being. It seemed to me that we should remain suspended here, an infinite consummation of our love. Her kisses filled my senses with such immeasurable bliss. I was almost deliriously infatuated with her mastery of my emotions and passions. She leaned over and turned off the light. She swam in my eyes as I watched her slowly unbutton her shirt in the cool, peaceful incandescence of the moon.

Three hours later, I was lying in my own bed, pleasantly exhausted physically, but unable to fall asleep. The events and mingled emotions of the day were playing over and over in my mind. Chief among these were the thoughts true fear and fatalism Isabelle had expressed earlier. Was I really so naive as she had indicated? I decided I had to try to help her.

Slowly letting my eyelids fall, I purposely let down my required near-permanent mental guard in order to allow myself to be more receptive. Suddenly, all was ebony and I heard the sound of rushing wind. It was coming; but this was not normal. It felt like there was an army. My breathing was growing swift. I bolted up, my heart beating wildly, and looked around my room. After convincing myself everything was properly in order, I closed my eyes to sleep- my defenses painfully alert...it had been strong..so strong.

For quite sometime, I had had the most bizarre and unsettling thought whizzing through my cranium- actually, for about two years; the phrase "Child of the light" is a common, Judeo-Christian one, referring to a child of God. But some people exude this phenomenon. Sure they aren't pure- they needn't even be religious. They just were born with an innocence of soul, even of their actions are less pristine. It can be seen in their eyes.

Well, my unself-initiated firm belief was that I was a Child of the Night. I guess that could have been my self-preserving way of explaining to myself why so many things in my life over which I had no control had gone wrong. It was as if I was being molded a little colder and angrier at the world then most. It was my understanding that someday, I would find that which I had been meant to do. As a result, I felt I had been more or less directed into the occult and considered myself above the myriads of mindless cultists and hypocritical, self-gratifying posers. And I had accepted my lot in life.

And I was afraid. I had never allowed myself to come face to face with the evil because, as Isabelle had mentioned, my reason had always won over my curiosity. But my reason was by no means dominant, as can be seen by the fact that I had persisted with my practices for over four years. The point of this quiet long-winded soliloquy is that this was the idea which had cropped up overnight and was deeply entrenched in my thoughts upon waking. Needless to point out, the timing of this recurrence was rather disturbing. I took the necessary steps to fill in those trenches so that I could proceed with the drudgeries of everyday life.

After performing the rites that granted me another day of existence, such as showering, getting dressed, and brushing my teeth, I called Jim, Mark, and Pete and arranged a seance for eleven o'clock that evening, explaining that we might actually accomplish something in this attempt. My mother complimented me on my godless appearance, and I thanked her with the least hostile grunt I could produce. Then I called Isabelle and asked her if she was still interested in taking part in one of our seances; she was delighted.

I picked her up at 6:30, before any of the others. She gave me a peck on the cheek as she got in the car, "Last night was fabulous. Thanks." I smiled back.

We stopped to pick up each of my friends; Pete was the last. I introduced Isabelle to him, and after she had exchanged greetings, she looked over at me and then out the window. I knew, but I don't know how, that she sensed about Peter and also my role in the sale of his soul. She softly said in my direction, "You rely less on Reason than I thought." But there was a lack of malice or disappointment in the

tone of her voice. We pulled into the dirt driveway of the old farmhouse, and I shuddered. It had been a long while since... Well as Halloween during my Junior year in high school, Jim, Pete, and I had come here a little after midnight, ready to complete a darker ritual than we were accustomed to. I had shuddered as we turned into the drive. We all got out, reluctantly, and stood for a moment, shining the beams of our flashlight into the house. Then, for "no reason", we all had looked at each other, hurriedly reentered the car and left as rapidly as possible. And now I felt it again, Jim's quick intake behind me told me that he obviously had as well. The past is much harder to forget in the occult.

I looked over at Isabelle, intending to turn the car around if she was feeling it too. She swiveled her head and smiled at me as though all was better than usual. I slowed the automobile to a halt, and looked in my mirror. Jim had an unsettled look on his face and Mark was a bit anxious; Peter of course was counting the moments, but I was used to Peter's odd enthusiasm.

The quick tour of our "spiritual facility" was the first order of business. As would ironically be expected Pete suggested we hold the seance in the room at the top of the first flight of stairs- the room I usually avoided on my excursions here alone. I had an unexplainable terror of that room. We set up the circle, clockwise from myself, with Isabelle, Jim, Mark, then Peter, who I preferred to have where I could control him...or at least try to...I lit the five black candles, which happened to correspond with the five participants, and we closed our eyes, but there was no time for the ritual summoning.

I felt my body jerk as my neck snapped back, but I was not harmed. Peter was chuckling, with the light from the candles dwarfed by the flames in his eyes. God, I hated when he did that!

He smiled broadly, "Have fun...I think you're really going to like this one!" And he stopped smiling.

Now, this scared me; when Peter didn't smile during a seance, it had to be a bad sign. I turned quickly to Isabelle, to see a tear running down her cheek...But surely the light was playing tricks on my perception! It was red..it was a tear of blood. She opened her

eyes, with the shiny red moisture on the lower eyelids. She shifted her attention to me, saying, "Oh, Christain...it hurts..oh, go, it hurts!", she began to shake.

Jim, who was frightened and uncertain of what to do, let loose his grasp on her hand. "No!", Mark and I screamed in a single voice, and I lunged for her free hand.

I became cold...so very, very cold. And I was terrified; I couldn't let Isabelle slip away, but his was far more than I had ever dealt with.

Peter spoke, but it wasn't Peter's voice; it was coarser and more distinct. "An interesting dilemma, wouldn't you say? I believe I am unknown to you...my name is Christopher Michael."

Demons do not give their names! All but the more powerful of them can be banished with their identities revealed, so this one was either lying or...wait! Michael Christopher- it did sound familiar. Michael Chri...oh, God, no! yes... Michael Christopher was one of the original fallen angles. One could not think of him in any human terms, for he had never been human. Mankind had always been subordinate to him. "Evil" is not a word which can be employed in describing him, for words are earthly creations; his sole purpose is malevolence and destruction, hatred and treachery. His immense darkness had played an active part in the creation of the all-encompassing, unimaginable evil that is a demon. By tradition, his greatest joy was in the corruption of "God's mortal creations." After all, they are only pawns! When he was present, a price would obviously be exacted. And I lost that glimmer of hope which had been a few seconds before.

"Ah, sweet realization," the voice said sarcastically. "She is quite a playtoy, isn't she? But such devotion to this creature of earth will come to no good end, my friend. 'My friend', because we are more alike than you imagine, you and I. But back to our dear Isabelle Morais, her pain is exquisite! I tell you only of her pain because you are well aware of her passion. She was such a fine catch, for the two of us." And he let free a low laugh.

My voice quaked as I attempted to contain my horror. "Whatever do you mean? She is not yours," but I was cut short.

"Oh, by all means, she is mine." A light blue wisp of vapor lifted Isabelle free of my

clutch and above our heads. She opened her eyes, and I could see the agony as she said, "Mon amour..je t'aime..help..help me", and she slipped into some languages which I can only guess was Old French or Gallic.

"Why are you doing this? What do you want of us?" I shouted. "We are not important to you!"

"Your friends are free to leave, but you, my friend..." Three scars appeared on Isabelle's arm and she dropped to the floor. "You are very important to me...We are very much alike, as I have already mentioned. Such a fine mortal! I have no use for this French whore, however. But I am not ungrateful; her existence has allowed me to speak with you. I will let her wish you a bon adieu." And he chuckled at the French use of the Holy name in a farewell.

Isabelle stirred and I lifted her up to a sitting position. She looked into my eyes-into the depths of my soul-sobbing. "How could you Michael?...Christian, I didn't want to ..not to you! I love you mon plus cher." She kissed me lightly, and placed her head on my shoulder.

"Satisfied?" inquired the voice, not expecting a reply. "Now, I believe her soul can rest in peace...our peace." He laughed loudly.

"Wait!" I yelled, and the laughter stopped abruptly. "I..I will give you my soul...for Isabelle's life." Tears were forming in my eyes. "Let her live and return to her own soul and you can have mine in exchange, since it is apparently of value to you, Christopher Michael..my friend."

There was a quick, sharp pain in my chest, but it was soon gone. "Oh, my friend, if only you knew what a service you are doing our cause, for you serve well our mutual cause now. What a future lies ahead for you..."

And he was gone. I collapsed. When I awoke I was on Isabelle's bed; it was Monday. She was sitting beside me, cradling my head in her lap; she jumped when my eyes opened. "Oh mon cher," and she was crying, "Why? What have you done?"

"What I had to do...I love you...I love you, Isabelle."

That was many years ago. The moon was bright that night, just as it is now. But I'm so far away from home, so very far away from Isabelle and our dear children.

This damned war is destroying my nerves and my sanity! When I was younger, we would talk of how this war would never take place- that mankind has much too intelligence. Why are we here? We cannot win...all that we can do is die, and we've become quite skilled at that since I arrived two years ago. I'm in command- such a farce! What is to command? I cannot control the chaos which runs rampant in my troops. Each soldier knows that his days are limited, and each one knows fear. If only Death seemed welcome to me! But I know better.

To think, the responsibility for the deaths of these men and the possible millions to follow is mine! When I began my studies in dimensional displacement and force-of-will enhancement, I had no intention that it would evolve into this. Just like nuclear fusion, it had all seemed so harmless at first.. and profitable. Now look at the profit! How quickly that thought came to me to investigate its potentials. Thanks Michael! Ah, yes! The Apocalypse Factor- what an invention! The Button at my disposal with nothing more than a thought. Such a great scientist am I...now such a fine soldier!

They have forced us from the plains. Any day now we will have to retreat into the valley, and then the mountains..and the coast...then we'll all die. Such futility...Is there no hope in life? No reason?...

"General Triste?" came the interruption at the door, and the middle-aged man behind the desk stopped writing. "Sir, the Soviets have entered the compound and sealed off all escapes! Moscow has demanded an unconditional surrender."

"Thank you, Captain." he replied, his head buried in his hands. "We will surrender; there are obviously no reasonable alternatives..."

At that moment, the siren throughout the compound sounded and the lights on the computer panel before the General flashed "All Missiles Launched."

"My God", he screamed, and fell back into his chair. "I didn't initiate this! Oh, no! What have I done? I've brought Judgement Day upon us all...How!!"

The Captain turned, smiling, and said, with a strange elation in his voice, "My good General Triste, you never have learned that Reason is not a consideration. And you always were the one who was so fond of noting how I sounded like your own thoughts—your own brain waves: the same waves that

generate the Apocalypse Factor. And now Judgement Day is upon us...". His laughter only lasted another seven and a half minutes. But there would have been no one on earth left to hear it after then, anyhow...



The Barenness of Revelation
Christopher Toombs

BIOGRAPHIES

John W. Bailey is a second year biology major. His interests include working for the Student Union Recreation Committee, running, blonde poets, and bothering his roommate. He hopes one day to be the poet laureate or Great Britain and to beat the Annihilators in Spades.

Christina Berg is a Freshman Psychology major. She isn't a Photography major yet, because she doesn't have a camera. She has played the piano for twelve years, likes to read, dabbles a little in poetry, and has two cats.

The picture on the front cover, taken by *Karen Eller*, is entitled *The Burning Of the Alice May*. It was taken in Alaska and named after an Alaskan folktale. Karen is a Senior Biology major from Virginia, but living in Israel. She spent the summer in Alaska researching bald eagles.

Amanda Eller is a Freshman from Todd, NC. Her pastimes include music, writing, and convincing her friends to read and critique her poetry.

Ashley Hairston is a Freshman from Walnut Cove, NC. His interests include piano (classical and jazz), writing, architectural design, reading, and classic movies. His ideas for possible major include English, Business, and Politics.

Martha Henseler is a Senior English major, History minor. She will continue in graduate school to (hopefully) receive a Ph.D. in English. She'd like to say "to the next time we do this", but she'd rather play in the leaves. So "this edition is for all the ones I'll never forget when I'm famous and even if I'm not."

Sherman J. Hollar, Sophomore narcoleptic, is enjoying his brief tenure at the bourgeois playground of Wake Forest. An English and history major, Sherm is an obscure but Underrated student columnist for the *Old Gold and Black*.

Frank Maslanka lives in Landenberg, PA. He is Biology/English major who enjoys playing sports, especially soccer and baseball. He plans to continue in medicine/research, but eventually be a writer of short stories, poems, and plays.

Amy Rave is a Senior English major from Pittsburgh, PA. She spent her summer writing for SALT magazine in Maine and plans to someday write for the *New Yorker*. After graduation she will either intern with the *Boston* magazine, swab decks on a cruise ship to Australia, run away to London to write and play, or go to graduate school and continue to teach aerobics.

Rochelle Reeves is a Sophomore Chemistry major from Newport News, VA. "Where ever you go, you'll be there. --Dick Hart"

Christopher Richter was born in Newport News, Virginia. He went to High School in Swedesboro, New Jersey, and now lives in Grass Valley, California. He has lived in ten other cities, as well. He is a Sophomore planning to major in Politics and minor in International Studies. "I aspire to a successful career in international law." His interests are numerous and varied: running, soccer, foreign languages, the supernatural, martial arts, and writing.

Kathy Shepherd is a Senior Biology major from Minnesota (near Canada). She wrote her poem while brushing her teeth. She worships dark chocolate.

Amy Trottier is a Senior Religion major and English minor. She has a great cat named Howard.



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